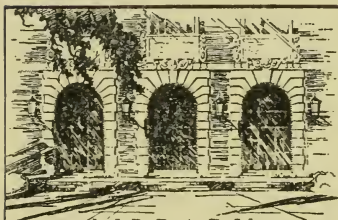


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KARAH KAPLAN;

OR,

THE KOORDISH CHIEF.

VOL. I.

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K A R A H K A P L A N ;

OR,

THE KOORDISH CHIEF.

A TALE OF PERSIA AND KOORDISTAN.

BY

THE HON. CHARLES STUART SAVILE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1842.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE VISCOUNT
POLLINGTON, M.P.

MY DEAR POLLINGTON,


The first time I ever visited Persia,
was in your company. In remembrance of
our journey through that interesting country,
I dedicate to you this tale of Persia and Koor-
distan, and with the most sincere regard re-
main,

Your affectionate brother,

CHARLES STUART SAVILE.

London, February, 1842.

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P R E F A C E.

ONE of the first observations likely to be made by any one who takes up this work, on perusing the title page, will be, what is the meaning of *Karah Kaplan*? In anticipation of this question, I have written a few lines concerning the name I have given to my story. It consists of two Turkish words, *Karah*, black, and *Kaplan*, a tiger, and is pronounced by laying the accent strongly on the first and last syllables, for instance *Kárah Kaplán*. It is the surname of a Koordish Chief, who plays a most conspicuous part in the narrative.

This tale is founded on fact, and some celebrated and well known characters make their

appearance in its pages, among whom may be noticed the late Shah Fath Ali.

It was originally my intention to have written a very short story, of a few pages, (the circumstances giving rise to it appearing in the second volume, Chapter XIII., the leading events of which really took place not long before the death of the late King;) but the work grew so upon my hands, that at length it wove itself into its present shape.

As no one can dislike reading long prefaces more than myself, I shall do as I would be done by, and bring these few necessary remarks to a conclusion. Hoping that Karah Kaplan will meet with indulgent readers; I leave it to its fate; if it should meet with approbation, the public will perhaps again hear from their sincere well-wisher,

THE AUTHOR.

KARAH KAPLAN;

OR, THE

KOORDISH CHIEF.

CHAPTER I.

—— And now went forth the morn
Such as in highest heaven, arrayed in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanished night
Shot through with orient beams;——

PARADISE LOST, BOOK vi.

THE morn had broken with all the delicious freshness peculiar to a Persian spring, upon the bazars(1) of Hamadan,(2) which presented the bustling and crowded appearance usual in an oriental town at that hour. Many and various were the sounds audible throughout this division of the city: in one part reverberated the heavy strokes from the hammers of the armourers as they fell with loud

clang upon the anvils ; from another rose the buzzing noise proceeding from the looms of the weavers and the bows of the cottonpickers, while at the same time the overpowering din was increased by the jingling of the bells attached to the necks of the camels and mules that were threading the bazars in long strings, and the shrill cries of the muleteers, uttered both as warnings to the crowd, and a spur to the animals to quicken their speed.

The atmosphere also of the bazars was strongly impregnated with the fumes issuing from the ovens of the shops belonging to the cooks of the city ; these booths were surrounded by anxious multitudes, whose countenances betrayed how much the sight of the delicious baked bread, the forced meat balls, and the hot cabobs(3) had acted on the appetites of the owners, and how eagerly they were waiting for the time to arrive for their turn to be served. A short way on might be seen the coffee-shops, where many were engaged in

smoking and sipping the juice of the pounded(4) berry, before entering on the business of the day. Bubbling kaliauns(5) were in the hands of these latter persons, some of whom, their means being sufficient to afford the expense, were inhaling therefrom the delicious(6) Tombakoo of Shiraz, while others, whose purses were lighter or dispositions more economical, were contenting themselves with the inferior sort of tobacco grown on the plains, which surrounded the city of Hamadan.

Through the midst of this motley crowd and clamour, a young Eliaut(7) was proceeding as rapidly as the nature of the place would allow. He had arrived on the previous day in the city, and had passed the night within its walls, and was now, his business being concluded, on the point of returning to the camp of his tribe. There was something most interesting in the appearance of this young man : his countenance possessed such a frank and open ex-

pression as to prepossess all who met him in his favour. His personal advantages also were by no means despicable ; his figure which was slight and supple was above the middle height, and appeared well formed for deeds of activity and strength ; his age might have been about twenty, although probably less, as his face was somewhat embrowned by constant exposure to the powerful rays of an oriental sun. By the quality of his garments, it was evident that he belonged to the lower orders, still although the texture demonstrated the poverty and low rank of the wearer, the habiliments themselves were put on with a certain care, that showed the Eliaut was not unconscious of his personal attractions. His eyes were large and bright, his features regular, while his upper lip was short and curled, being fringed with a very slight moustache, and so small as hardly worthy to be called by such a name. When he smiled, which was often, his parted lips dis-

played teeth beautifully even, and of the whitest hue; his chin was round and perfectly free from all appearance of a beard, being smooth as that of a maiden.

After much bustling and some exertion, Feridoon, for such was the name of the youth, had succeeded in making his way to a part of the bazar, where the crowd somewhat diminished, when his attention was suddenly aroused by a shrill cry of, "Clear the way, clear the way, faces to the wall." On looking towards the spot whence the sounds proceeded, he perceived a large party of Ferashes,(8) with long poles in their hands, driving the mob before them. On observing the approach of these persons and hearing the orders proclaimed by them, the Eliaut became aware of the proximity of women of rank;(9) and accordingly having retreated behind a buttress which projected from a neighbouring shop, awaited the passing of the party, which came on at a

slow and solemn pace. In front walked six ferashes bearing long white wands in their hands, with which they cleared the path, indiscriminately striking all persons whose want of activity had not permitted them to retreat in sufficient time, to evade the shower of blows. Behind these men and mounted on an Arab horse, the bridle of which was held by a black slave, rode a lady closely veiled, who was evidently the chief personage of the cavalcade. Following her at a respectful distance, came several women, their horses led by black eunuchs. Some mounted servants brought up the rear, whose splendid steeds and gaudy dresses evinced that they belonged to the household of some wealthy Khan of high rank.

As the procession passed by the spot where Feridoon was standing, the veil of the foremost lady was accidentally blown aside by a sudden gust of wind, and displayed a most lovely face

to the eyes of the youth, who neglecting to obey in every respect the injunctions of the ferashes, had remained gazing upon the harem. (10) The countenance thus beheld was one of those often described in the high flown poetry of oriental writers, but rarely met with in the reality of life, it was surpassing not only in beauty, but in angelic expression.

The view obtained by the Eliaut of the lovely features, was but transient, for the hateful veil being quickly replaced, hid them from his gaze; but a single glance had sufficed to reveal their perfection, and Feridoon stood entranced, forgetful of all around, his eyes fixed upon the retreating form, when a sudden and violent blow on his head, awakened him from his reverie, and on turning round, he beheld a ferash, with an uplifted stick, in the attitude of one who had just inflicted a blow, he was about to repeat.

“Dog with a burnt father,” (11) cried the man,

in a furious voice, " what dirt are you eating, how comes it, that you dare to look up when women are passing ; hasten, you less than man, to turn your defiled face to the wall, or you shall devour(12) more stick than you can digest in a fortnight."

Having thus spoken, the ferash struck the Eliaut youth over the face and shoulders with his long poplar wand, and proceeded on his route.

" Lachnet ba sare shooma, curses on your head," muttered Feridoon, as his tyrant walked off ; " would we could meet alone on the maidan, with a Cummar(13) each for our weapon, and a cloak for our shield, and then Mashallah,(14) you would discover, that I am not to be beaten by a defiled ass, without retaliating ten-fold. By Ali, I would not leave you with a piece of skin hanging to your unclean body."

The irritation of the moment at length passed away, and the Eliaut having recovered

the wonted serenity of his temper, his thoughts reverted to the beautiful vision which had crossed his path.

“Mashallah,” he exclaimed, half aloud, “whoever gazed upon such perfection before? By my father’s soul, none less than a princess could possess such charms; alas! that I should have been unfortunate enough to behold them.”

Thus musing he turned to the owner of the nearest shop, and inquired in an apparently careless tone of voice of whom the party, that had just gone by, consisted.

The armourer, for such was the trade of the man addressed, looked up at this question, and surveying Feridoon with an air of contempt, answered derisively:

“Whose dog are you, not to recognise the servants of Mehtee Khan,(15) the Begler Beg of Hamadan; but I perceive now I look upon your dress, that you are an Eliaut. Your ques-

tion, therefore, appears no longer strange, for how should a dweller in tents know about cities ?”

“ Yonder then is the Begler Beg’s ande-room,” returned Feridoon, keeping up an appearance of unconcern, and without seeming to notice the contemptuous manner of the armourer. “ By the head of Ali, his star was in the ascendant, when he got possession of such a lovely wife.”

“ Padersookhteh,” said the other indignantly, “ put a bridle on your tongue ; the world is come to a pretty pass when asses are suffered to talk in such an irreverent manner concerning women belonging to the harems of such a man as Mehtee Khan. Know, driveller, the foremost lady of those who just rode by, is the Khanum Zoraya, the maiden daughter of the Begler Beg.”

“ Then,” replied the Eliaut, “ allow me to observe, with due reverence, that few, whether

wife or virgin, can stand in comparison with her; by Allah, they would appear as the moon eclipsed before the mid-day sun."

"With respect to that matter," answered the armourer, "report speaketh highly of her beauty; still I marvel at your thinking so favourably of her charms, as the glimpse you appeared to catch of them, was the cause of your eating a tolerable quantity of stick. Mashallah, yonder ferash must have made a good astronomer of you."

"How so," replied Feridoon, surprised at the remark.

"Why!" continued the other, "by making you behold in one moment, more stars than have been discovered by the wisest philosophers since the world began. But cheer up, young man, you are not the first Mussulman who hath entangled himself in a scrape on account of a woman's face."

With these words the armourer resumed

his occupation, and Feridoon was left to his own reflections.

“ So then,” thought the young man as he turned his steps slowly from the spot, “ yonder angel is not the wife, but the daughter of the Begler Beg ; still how can it avail me in the slightest degree, whether she be wife or maiden ; who am I, that I should dare even to think of one so exalted ; still all efforts to drive that lovely countenance from my imagination, must prove abortive ; but I am a Persian, let that be my excuse. Could the coldest hearted son of Iran(17) behold such beauty unveiled, and not be entirely consumed by the fire, which darts like forked lightning from those eyes ?”

With his thoughts running on in this strain, Feridoon quitted the city, and directing his steps towards the encampment of his tribe, arrived about sunset at his father’s tent.

This old man was a member of a tribe of Eliauts(18) who were wont to pitch their tents,

about the commencement of every spring, at the foot of that mountainous range, which bounds the northern extremity of the plain of Hamadan.

The lot of Ismael, for by that name he was known, was to all appearance most miserable, his whole portion being poverty and wretchedness, while his tent which he owed to charity, was one of the meanest in the country; and notwithstanding his age, he was compelled in order to support himself, to add to his scanty stock by a pittance received from one of the principal Eliauts in return for his taking charge of his flocks; in short, at the time this story commences, the father of Feridoon was merely a hireling shepherd.

Still, although poverty stricken, although humble and mean to destitution, it was rumoured that his lot had not always been cast in so low a sphere of life; more than one of the veteran wanderers retained some indistinct

remembrance of one bearing a strong resemblance to Ismael, having in former days been a favourite at court and possessor of great wealth ; but by degrees such reports dying away, were gradually forgotten, and few, while gazing on the bent form and miserable appearance of the aged shepherd, would have imagined that he had ever been an actor in a totally different scene of life. There were times, however, when an acute observer might have perceived his eye brighten and his form dilate, when deeds of prowess or of chivalry were mentioned in his presence, but these changes were like a chance sunbeam in a cloudy sky, and in the succeeding moment Ismael was, to all appearance, once more the lowly Eliaut shepherd.

All that was known with certainty concerning this old man, was, that many years before, he had suddenly appeared among the Eliauts and had taken refuge under the nobleman, who

was at that time their chief, by whom he had been much befriended, and that some time afterwards he had espoused the daughter of a Khan of the tribe. Since, however, the death of his patron, the chief, and the sudden disgrace and execution of his father-in-law, which sad event had taken place shortly after his marriage, Ismael had been totally ruined, and had sunk into his present obscurity.

His misfortunes preyed deeply on his mind, and were the cause of his shunning in a great degree the society of his fellow creatures ; indeed, on account of his reserved and retired habits, the younger members of the tribe were wont to accuse him of misanthropy ; but they were in error, for the disposition of Ismael was by nature, far too gentle to harbour hatred against any one, and although his spirit was broken, still his temper was by no means soured by the bad fortune that had embittered his life.

In one circumstance, however, histakdeer(19) had not been utterly adverse, for he was the possessor of a son, the offspring of the Eliaut wife whom he had espoused from the tribe. Ismael had not married again since her decease, which occurred in giving birth to Feridoon, her first and only child.

The bereaved husband had reared the boy with the utmost care, and from his own resources of knowledge which were great, had privately bestowed upon him an education much superior to what usually falls to the lot of a Persian, even of the highest rank, and well was the fondness of the parent repaid by the affection of the son. Young Feridoon had passed his nineteenth year, and was acknowledged by all to whom he was known, as one of the handsomest youths among the black tents. Of a disposition ardent and affectionate, of a temper courageous and enterprising, a more devoted child never existed ; he seemed to live for

the sole purpose of being of service to his parent. Had a sheep from Ismael's flock strayed from its fellows, young Feridoon, swift as an antelope and surefooted as a goorkhur,(20) would traverse the rockiest and most dangerous cotalls,(21) tracking the animal with the sagacity of a hound, heedless of every difficulty and insensible of all feeling of fatigue, and if fortune smiled upon his efforts, the words, "Allah bless thee my child," and the consciousness of having preserved his father from the displeasure of his employer, entirely repaid him for all the hardships he had undergone. When at times the spirits of his parent were more than usually depressed, no story-teller or meerza could have more skillfully raised them by the recital or reading of cheering selections from the works of the oriental poets or the soothing precepts of the Koran; indeed, such were the talents and goodly disposition of the youth, that had Ismael been

deprived of him, the old Eliaut, notwithstanding his powers of endurance, could scarcely have dragged on his otherwise miserable existence ; but as fate had ordained it, although struck with the iron hand of misery, and often looked upon with the eye of contumely, he consoled himself with the reflection, that although in other matters to him unpropitious, Providence had bestowed upon him a dutiful and affectionate child, the possession of whom was more valuable in the estimation of his father than all the wealth and luxuries belonging to the noblest Khans of the land.

CHAPTER II.

And here, before thy throne, I swear
From my heart's inmost core to tear
Love, hope, remembrance, though they be
Linked with each quivering life-string there,
And give it bleeding all to thee.

LALLA ROOKH.

WHEN Feridoon entered his father's tent, on his return from Hamadan, he found the old man awaiting his arrival with a gayer expression of countenance than was usual to him, and which was owing to Ismael's having found favour in the sight of his chief, and receiving, in consequence as an enam,(1) some dishes from the Khan's kitchen, consisting of a pilloulle(2) and various cabobs, the sight of which being considered as a good omen, had diffused a happy appearance over the shep-

herd's face, who hailed the gift as a sign of the approach of an unusual visit from Fortune.

“ Alhamdellilah,” he exclaimed as the youth entered, “ you are welcome my son, your place has been empty. Behold what Abbas Khan has sent us ; may his shadow never be less ! Come, wash your hands and Bismillah ! (3) let us sit down and commence. Barakillah,” he continued, “ this pillouille is excellent, the cook of whose handiwork it is a specimen, must indeed be a master of his craft ; he is well worthy of serving his Majesty the Shah.”

While giving utterance to these expressions, Ismael was thrusting his fingers deep into the dish of rice, when directing an accidental glance towards his son, he perceived that Feridoon, instead of partaking of the repast, was sitting in a melancholy attitude with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

“ Che cheezast, what is it, my child ?” he inquired, astonished at the unusual behaviour of the youth.

“Keh medanum, what do I know?” answered his son; “it is nothing, only a dildard.”(4)

“Nay!” returned Ismael, “that cannot be all; some misfortune has crossed your path, or you would never remain idle, after your tedious walk, while such a repast as the present was before you. Come, my Feridoon, delay not; tell me what has damped your spirits.”

“Alas, my father,” replied Feridoon, “if I do inform you of all, you will laugh at me.”

“Do you not know your parent better?” said the old man, somewhat reproachfully; “as you love me, relate all, for although I may not be able to afford you aid, perhaps my advice may be useful.”

Feridoon thus pressed, proceeded to give his father a description of the morning's scene in Hamadan, winding up his recital with a vehement declaration of his love for the Begler Beg's daughter.

For an instant, a flush of pride lightened up the countenance of the aged Eliaut, and his thoughts reverted to bygone days; but the feeling was transient, and his features resumed their wonted humility of cast, as he observed dejectedly,

“ Alas my son, this is indeed a misfortune. Unhappy was the gust that revealed those features to your sight; I was young once, and know the effect of beauty on a Mussulman’s breast; still, my child, strive to bury in oblivion what you have seen, if you would fain avoid heaping ashes on our heads.”

“ How can I forget,” answered the youth; “ tear my heart from my breast, beat my brains out, and perhaps I may succeed in following your advice, till then—

“ Talk not thus wildly,” replied Ismael, “ reflect but an instant, and imagine how dreadful might be the consequences of the report reaching the Begler Beg’s ears, that the son of a poor Eliaut shepherd (for alas who am I now ?)

has dared to lift up the eyes of affection to his daughter ; were such the case, what endless dirt might we not be forced to swallow."

" You are right, my father," replied Feridoon with determination ; " it is ridiculous in a peasant humble as myself, even to think on one of such exalted rank ; I will follow your injunctions, I will strive if possible to master my feelings, and notwithstanding they may eat deep into my heart's core, still I will persevere, and try to obliterate the lovely vision from my mind."

" Inshallah !" cried the old man, " Inshallah ! may you have strength of mind sufficient to keep to the determination ; let the stick of which you have already tasted, have the effect of driving from your memory the cause of your love. But come taste of this pillouille, behold the rice is white as the snows of Demawend,(5) and the dish itself is a foretaste of the feasting in Paradise."

Feridoon obeyed, and the provisions soon disappeared between the united efforts of father and son.

“ Well done,” said Ismael, as he washed his hands at the conclusion of the repast, “ a good dinner is an admirable solacer of grief ; you will rise with to-morrow’s dawn, forgetful of all khanums, save the houris of Paradise.”

Feridoon shook his head doubtingly, but answered not to the observation of his father.

“ Yes my son,” continued the shepherd, “ I speak the truth, on my eyes be it if sleep restore you not to your usual spirits. To your couch therefore, Feridoon, rest in peace, and God be with you.”

With this benediction he rose, and having, like a good Mussulman said his prayers, for Ismael was a strict observer of the ordinances of his religion, he wrapped himself in his sheepskin and throwing himself on a num-

mud6 in the corner of his tent soon gave audible tokens of sound sleep.

Feridoon likewise sought his couch, but in vain, sleep was long absent from his pillow; the more he sought to compose himself to rest, the further he was from succeeding; notwithstanding all his endeavours, the unveiled face of the morning would rush to his recollection and disturb his wished-for repose.

At length, when overcome with fatigue, the enamoured youth sunk into slumber; confused visions, having reference to his waking thoughts, came over his excited brain. At one time he fancied himself on the plain driving his father's sheep before him, when an enormous pack of wolves attacked and carried off the flower of his flock, and while he was attempting to rush to the rescue, the figure of the Hamadan maiden appeared, and having drawn him from the pursuit, vanished at the moment he was clasping her in his embrace. Another

while, he was in the bazars of Hamadan, when the cavalcade again passed him and he beheld once more the face of the lady unveiled, and as the beauteous vision was disappearing from his gaze, he imagined she beckoned to and called him by name. He was flying towards her when he felt himself held back; at length, after various flighty visions, tending to the same issue, his dreams assumed such an appearance of reality that shrieking aloud he awoke, and beheld his father standing over him, with the utmost anxiety depicted upon his features.

“What is the matter, my child,” inquired old Ismael hastily. “I was awakened just now by your cries, and on coming to your bedside perceived you writhing in your sleep as if in tortures, while the sweat drops were running down your face.”

“O, my father,” replied the youth, “I have been visited by such dreams, which must

portend some coming fate ; when morning dawns it were well to seek old Baba, the fortune-teller, and question him concerning them."

"Beware of such folly," replied Ismael anxiously. "By the head of Ali take heed of informing any one, save myself, of this ill-fated occurrence ; should old Baba discover your love for the Begler Beg's daughter, the foozool would scarcely rest until all his friends were made acquainted with the circumstance, and then, may their ancestors be defiled, you would inevitably become the laughing stock of the tribe."

"Afakerillah !" said Feridoon, "O cursed Takdeer, why keep alive in my brain the remembrance of the object I would fain forget."

"Besides which," continued the shepherd, "that would not be the worst consequence of your imprudence : the tale might reach the Begler Beg and then ruin—total ruin would hang over our heads. Alas ! Feridoon, were I

to lose thee, the last tie which binds me to this wretched world would be torn asunder. Let me entreat you to take the advice of one whose beard is white with age, and follow not your own rash ideas ; you, on whose lip the down has scarcely appeared ; throw all into oblivion, excepting that your father is now no more than a common shepherd." Having thus spoken the good old man returned to his nummud while Feridoon, having pondered over his parent's words, with a firm determination to profit by the advice therein contained, once more sought the repose which had been disturbed by his feverish dreams.

During the whole of the following day, a great change was observable to all in the behaviour of Feridoon. His joyous songs did not, as usual, echo along the mountains, nor did he bandy the joke as was his wonted manner, with his companions ; his whole deportment was altered, and in his sad and pining countenance, the once animated and joyous

features of the youth could scarcely be recognised.

“What ails you, Feridoon?” observed a shepherd, surprised at the want of hilarity evinced by the young Eliaut; “has your path been crossed by a Jin(7)?”

“Is your brain out of order,” cried another; “or have you forgotten to wind up your spirits, that you thus stalk about like an infidel in Jehanum(8)? Wallah, Billah, one would suppose you were about to be tied up to the felek, with that rueful face of yours.”

Feridoon answered at random to these questions, and made several attempts to rally his spirits, but in vain. As soon as the shades of evening approached, he sought the quiet of his father’s tent, where throwing himself on the ground, he remained in moody silence.

For more than a week this line of conduct continued, and Feridoon, on whose cheek the rose had been imbued with its most glowing

colours, whose eyes had been brighter than those of the favourite falcon of the chief, whose form had been erect as a poplar, and whose activity had been the envy of all ; alas, Feridoon became pale and emaciated. The sports of the young men, the wrestling matches, and hunting excursions no longer drew forth his prowess ; the manly game of the jereed(9), or the feats of horsemanship and arms for which he had once been famous, no longer called forth his energies ; on the contrary, his stooping carriage and saddened gait, plainly evinced that some concealed chagrin preyed upon his mind.

His father beheld, with aching heart, the alteration in his son's appearance, and knowing too well the cause, determined at all hazards to alleviate if possible his distress.

After many inquiries the old man discovered that the early youth of Mehtee Khan, the Begler Beg of Hamadan, had been passed in a

much lower sphere than his present high situation seemed to warrant; in short, that the origin of the khan was most humble, his father having been a simple Rayat(10), but owing to circumstances not generally known, the son had risen from grade to grade to his present high office.

Ismael was much encouraged on ascertaining the truth of the above circumstance, and in the fullness of his heart thus reasoned with himself: "Barakillah! O the fortunate news; the case, after all, is not so bad; surely Mehtee Khan can see no harm in allying himself with my son, if he were but aware, who, and what I once was; he is wealthy himself, and therefore my present poverty ought not to prove an insurmountable barrier to the consummation of my son's happiness. Five and twenty years ago, when I arrived penniless and oppressed by fate at the Eliaut encampment, did not Koolee Khan, (may true justice light on

his perjured murderers) give me his daughter in marriage ; and besides, where is the Persian who is equal to Feridoon, in beauty of person and endowments of mind? By my father's grave, what harm can there be in my making a representation to the khan, that it will be difficult to find a better match for his daughter than my Feridoon ; surely I may let him know what I once was, without danger. Inshallah ! to-morrow's sun shall not set before I have made my salaam at the Begler Beg's palace ; and may Fortune guide my footsteps !"

Such were the airy castles fought by his ambitious hopes, raised in the imagination of the old man, whose own kindly disposition led him to form an idea of mankind from his own heart, being little aware of the facility with which those who have risen from low to high rank succeed in burying in oblivion the remembrance of their former condition.

CHAPTER III.

Away, away, strike other chords ;

We will not dwell on themes like these.—

THE mountains that gird the plain on which the city of Hamadan is situated, were already coloured with the lovely rose-tinge of a Persian dawn, when Ismael, arrayed in his best apparel, sallied forth staff in hand from the encampment, and without informing his son of his intentions, further than that in all probability his absence would not extend beyond the second day, he directed his course towards Hamadan, which was about four fursuks(1) distant.

On arriving at his journey's end he proceeded to the nearest Hummum,(2) and having gone through the usual routine of an Oriental bath,(3) and his beard and nails being newly dyed, he proceeded towards the palace of the Begler Beg.

That formidable functionary was seated cross-legged at the window of his Dewaukhanah, which overlooked the court-yard, and was giving audience to various complainants, and adjudging their causes.

He had just decided on a case of theft, and had condemned an unhappy criminal to lose his ears; which sentence was in the act of being carried into execution when Ismael came forward.

Although the moment seemed by no means favorable for the preferring of his suit, still Ismael, having mustered courage, walked up within speaking distance of the Khan, whose features were gathered together in an ominous

frown, and having made a profound inclination of the body, stood in a respectful attitude, with his arms crossed over his breast.

“Who are you, what do you want?” presently demanded the Begler Beg, on turning his eyes upon the form of the old man.

“Your slave,” answered Ismael humbly, “begs to represent that he is an Eliaut, come to lay a request at your footstool.”

“Ayb na daurad, there is no harm in that,” returned the Khan; “speak out, what is your complaint?”

“I am your sacrifice,” replied the Eliaut. “May your shadow never be less; it is no complaint, but a representation which your slave requests permission to offer at the threshold of your power.”

“Well then,” said the Begler Beg, “do not hesitate; let us hear at once what you desire to say.”

“Your slave is somewhat fearful of speaking

his mind," replied Ismael, "lest he offend in your gracious sight."

"We sit here for the purpose of administering justice," answered the Begler Beg, "and do not take offence, provided the applicant at our footstool utter sense; speak out, therefore, old man, and fear not."

"The condescension of your excellency is great, may it ever be on the increase," returned the Eliaut. "O Khan! be not offended at your slave's inquiring whether or not it be true, that, although you at present fill a high situation, you were once in a lower sphere of life, from which your talents have helped to raise you."

"What does he say?" cried the Begler Beg in amazement.

"Your less than the least," continued Ismael, "speaks the truth, so please your mightiness; were you not in former days, nearly as poor as I appear to be, and have you

not risen from that state by means of your great wisdom ?”

“ Whose base-born dog are you ? what ass was your father ?” roared out the Khan furiously. “ I told you to utter sense, not to rave ; here, seize him, strike him on the mouth with your slippers.”

The attendant ferashes needed not a second injunction, but instantly rushed on the old man, who having received several severe blows, cried out in a piteous tone :

“ Aman !⁽⁴⁾ O Begler Beg, aman, hear me, I beseech you.”

“ Well then, merdike,”⁽⁵⁾ said the Begler, making a sign to the ferashes to desist, “ speak out like a man, not like a Dewaneh,⁽⁶⁾ on your eyes be it, if you bring lies to our presence, proceed : I will listen.”

Ismael had gone too far to recede, so notwithstanding he perceived that matters were not going on as well as he could desire, he

boldly plunged at once into the middle of his subject, and informed the Khan, that although he now appeared before him as an humble Eliaut shepherd, that it was misfortune only and the will of Allah, that had reduced him to his present condition, requesting a private audience to prove the truth of his words. He then related the circumstances of his son's late visit to Hamadan, at the time he had beheld the unveiled face of the lady Zoraya, entreating the Khan to give the ear of attention to his statement, and to allow the young Feridoon to be brought into his presence.

Ismael would have proceeded further, but he was interrupted by the Begler Beg, who had at first been rendered speechless, by astonishment, at the shepherd's audacity, for he did not give the slightest credit to what the old man had asserted concerning his former rank, but believed him to be either a

foozool or a madman. On recovering, however, the use of his tongue, the khan made amends for his silence by bawling out to his ferashes, in a voice scarcely articulate from rage :

“ Here, you dog’s sons ! asses ! idiots ! where were your brains when you suffered this son of a grilling father to laugh at my beard ; why the very sight of his unsainted carcase is pollution. Here ! drive the harumzadeh(7) from my presence ; woe betide him, if he venture hither again with such dirt in his mouth.”

These orders were implicitly obeyed, and old Ismael having been ejected from the court in a most violent and unceremonious manner, found himself in the street, his body much bruised, and his clothes torn in the scuffle.

“ Wahi,(8) wahi,” cried the unfortunate man as he limped away, “ what ashes have fallen on my head, that I should be used thus. May

the Begler Beg's hearth be defiled, the Pader-sookhteh ! may his liver dry up ! Why should he have treated me with such violence, what harm have I done, why should not a father recite the praises of his son, and such a son too, as Feridoon ? Surely the Khan might have heard me to the end of my representation, before turning me from his door and treating me like an infidel, as I am a true believer he has eaten uncleanness ; but stay, perhaps it is I that am in error, perhaps I chose an unfortunate hour to cross his threshold. Inshallah ! it was so ; barakillah ! it was so ; on my eyes be it, if I attempt not once more to soften his heart ; to-morrow I will prefer my suit anew. Why should I despair, am I not a father, and father too of such a son ! Afakerillah let despair be far away from me.

Muttering thus to himself Ismael proceeded to the bazar, and having purchased some bread

and cabobs betook himself to a caravanserai(9) where he made a hearty meal, for his bad reception at the Begler Beg's Dewaukhaneh, had by no means destroyed his appetite.

His frugal repast being finished, and the sun having set, the old man said his prayers, sought out a snug corner in an empty stable and wrapping himself within the folds of his bala-poosh(10) was soon sound asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

Though never yet hath daybeam burned
Upon a brow more fierce than that—
Sullenly fierce—a mixture dire,
Like the thunder-clouds, of gloom and fire !
In which the Peri's eye could read
Dark tales of many a ruthless deed.

PARADISE AND THE PERI.

THE Eliaut had been for some time in a state of repose, when he was suddenly aroused by a noise near at hand, and on opening his eyes perceived two men seated several paces distant, on a nummud, smoking their chibouques.(1) A lamp, which was burning before them casting a dark shadow over the corner in which Ismael lay, was the cause of his being unperceived by the new comers,

who appeared in earnest conversation with each other. Although they did not raise their voices much above a whisper, Ismael, by lying perfectly still and listening attentively, managed to overhear the words of their discourse, which had evidently only just commenced when he awoke.

“ Well, Moorad Beg,”(2) said one of the speakers, a middle aged weather beaten man, with a thick, short grisly beard, and whose dress and manner proclaimed him at once to be a Chervador,(3) “ how works our scheme ?”

“ Inshallah,” answered his companion, “most successfully, although it is such a dangerous enterprise ; for should we fail and be taken in the attempt, woe betide us, we shall find our shadows less by a head ; for look you, friend Hussein, Mehtee Khan would by no means be inclined to forgive such an offence, as the abduction of his daughter ; we must therefore be cautious, lest these cowbeards

have any suspicion of our intention; though I must own that they have evinced a marvellous want of sagacity, hitherto. By the head of the Shah, there is scarcely a miscal(4) of sense in a dozen maunds of Hamadaneer heads; how I long to laugh their beards to scorn."

"But," observed Hussein, "though there may be a scarcity of brain among them, still they have eyes and ears, and wear swords, and what is more, know well how to use the latter. I must confess I half repent of having agreed to join your expedition."

"Nay Hussein, surely you are not going to acknowledge yourself an ass," returned the man, who was accosted by the name of Moorad Beg; "by Ali, it were better at once to put on the garments of a woman, if your heart is so craven; remember, as the service is dangerous, so is the reward great in proportion. The Karah Kaplan is rich, and provided

you serve him faithfully, your mules will scarcely be able to walk under the heavy weight of gold which will be awarded you.”

The last speaker was a much younger man than his companion, and although dressed in the same style and in garments of still coarser manufacture than those worn by the muleteer Hussein, still there was a superiority in his air, and a polish in his manner, that would have created a suspicion in the mind of any one who had closely observed him, that he had moved in a higher station than the one he then appeared to occupy.

His language also was a much more refined sort than that usually spoken by a common muleteer, besides which, a Koordish accent at times betrayed itself in his speech; still it was so slight that it might have been occasioned by a lengthened residence in countries inhabited by Koords.

His face was uncommonly handsome, but

its beauty was somewhat marred by a stern, almost ferocious expression that pervaded it; there could indeed have been little hesitation in asserting that there was no deed, however ruthless or cruel, no scheme however dangerous, or difficult of performance, that for the gratification of revenge, the owner of such a countenance was not ready to execute: still that countenance was eminently handsome, and possessed a dignity which evidently nothing could have humbled. His height was gigantic, while his limbs were cast in a mould where elegance was united with Herculean strength. His beard was cut close to his chin, but on his upper lip he wore his moustachios very long, and curled with great care. His eyes were dark and keen as an eagle's, so bright indeed that they appeared to read the very thoughts of those whom he addressed.

On this person's mentioning the name of Mehtee Khan, and coupling it with the

intended abduction of his daughter an exclamation of surprise rose to the lips of Ismael, and it was with much difficulty that he refrained from giving utterance to a sound; summoning, however, his utmost attention, he awaited the remainder of the conversation in breathless suspense.

“ You say true,” replied Hussein in answer to the last remark of his companion, “ the Karah Kaplan is rich, and differs in one respect, most materially from the Khans of my country, for he spends his money freely in rewarding those who serve him well; had I not already had reason to know as much, you would scarcely have persuaded me to risk my life in this hazardous scheme; but as you with truth observe, the Khan is no niggard of his purse.”

“ Mashallah, Hussein,” observed Moorad, “ keep that uppermost in your mind; forget the danger, and remember only the gold

tomans(5) which have and will be poured into your mule-bags ; think only of the gold and the path of peril will become a maidan(6) of velvet ; and now, friend Hussein, in order that we may not grow dull in each others society, behold I have brought a flask of the best wine produced by the vineyards of Shiraz."

"What ! wine ! Moorad Beg," exclaimed the Chervador. "I thought you too strict a Musulman to——"

"Bash !" replied the other ; "do you deem me such an idiot as to slight the gifts of Allah ; do you suppose that our prophet, when he forbade the juice of the grape to true believers ever dreamed of such delicious wine as this, which I procured some two months since, when we plundered a caravan on the road between Shiraz and Ispahan ? Why the very mule on which lay the skins which contained his delicious liquor, was the property of,

and was bound to the Muhstehed(7) of Teheran, and was said to contain some of the salt water from Bender Busheer, so famous for curing fevers."

"Nay surely you are calumniating the Mushtehed," said Hussein; "he is a man of great reputed sanctity."

"As I am a true Koord," replied Moorad, "I speak the truth. I know the old hypocrite well; methinks the seizure of the caravan proved a fortunate occurrence for him, for had the *waters* ever reached their destination, he would have drunk himself into a high fever."

Moorad then proceeded to pour out some of the wine from a leathern bottle into a cup of the same material, which he emptied at a draught.

"Barakillah," cried the Chervador, "yon juice of the grape smells well. I care not if I have a draught. Mashallah!" he continued

after having followed the example set by his companion, "you are right, our blessed prophet forbade not liquor such as this; it raises the courage too. With a flask of it within me, I could face even a Jin on the mountains, much less would I fear the Prince's ferashes; what are they? Bash! As you love me, Moorad Beg, give me a large flask full, when we are on the point of starting on our expedition, and may I be burned if I enact not the part of a Rustum."(8)

"But beware, Hussein," returned his companion, "of the strength of this wine; take heed, lest, instead of fortifying yourself with courage, you stupify that head of yours, which sooth to say, was never very intellectual; should you unfit yourself for service on the coming occasion, it is most probable that some inches of steel may bring you to your recollection."

"Nay, Moorad Beg;" observed Hussein,

draining a second cup, "rest assured you shall never have occasion to use your cummar on the person of your most devoted slave. As I am a true Sheah,(9) the very flash of your eyes, when you are excited, would alone be sufficient to keep sober the most confirmed drunkard."

"In that case," replied the Koord, "I care not if I bestow a small flask on you, for the day of our enterprise; but take heed that you keep my caution in mind."

"Bachesm!" replied Hussein, "on my eyes be it, if I forget your injunctions; but, Moorad Beg, since we have at different times talked over portions of our scheme, without detailing it in one connected link, methinks, it would not be amiss, were you to recount the whole story from beginning to end, while we finish this wine, as I confess I am somewhat confused concerning what is to be done;

so commence at once, as if I knew nothing, and had all to learn."

"Padersookhteh!" answered Moorad knitting his brow at the request of the Chervador; "do you mean to assert, that, after all I have told you, after the money you have already touched, you do not understand your business? By our blessed prophet, may your father's grave be defiled, should you enact the part of ignorance when you are called upon to act! I swear, as I hope to possess the future joys of a true believer, that, in such a case you shall be torn limb from limb, and die in such slow torments that the Jehanum of the Infidels shall be happiness to it."

"Aman!" ejaculated the Chervador panic struck. "Aman! Moorad Beg, your slave merely begged to observe, that it would be none the worse were you sufficiently condescending to relate your plans at length,

in order to prevent any confusion from arising. I swear, by the sacred clay, that I will be faithful, and impress every word of thine, as deep on my mind, as if I carved them on the solid rock. Do not, therefore, knit your brow and look so fierce, else notwithstanding your Shiraz wine and golden promises, you may cause my heart to leap out of my mouth, and so lose the services of your most humble slave."

"Well then, Hussein," said the Koord, "listen with the ears of a man not of an ass, and I will begin."

"I am all attention," returned the other, lighting a fresh pipe.

"You are aware," said Moorad commencing his recital, "that Allah Verdee Khan, surnamed Karah Kaplan, is chief of one of those Koordish tribes which profess the sheah religion, and pitch their tents on the south western frontiers of Persia. By the shield of Ali,

the world holds not such another Rustum as the gallant Karah Kaplan; give him but a stout horse and a good sword, and open space sufficient to use them, and single handed he would defy a whole regiment of the Shah's Serbaz(10); Iran holds not one comparable to him in beauty; his brawny shoulders and taper waist would shame a Yusuff(11) and the fire of his eye would eclipse that of a hawk from the Germaseer.(12) Mashallah! he can look fierce at times; even I have almost shuddered at beholding him under the influence of a violent fit of passion."

"What, Moorad Beg, you afraid!" said Hussein, "is it possible?"

"Fool!" retorted the Koord angrily, "I talked not of being afraid; I merely meant to observe that times have occurred when I felt not quite at mine ease in his presence; but as for fear, actual fear, such a feeling has never entered the breast of Moorad the lieu-

tenant and foster-brother of Allah Verdee Khan."

"Pardon me," returned the Chervador, "I meant not to accuse you of such a failing; but speak not so loud, lest we be overheard."

"With all these advantages of person," continued Moorad lowering his voice, "the Khan is a very Locman in wisdom, and besides possesses wealth enough to buy the father of all the Russians, so that the supposition would be, that the greatest noble of Iran would be happy to have him for a son-in-law. But to the point: my chief not long since chanced to behold the Khanum Zoraya, daughter to Mehtee Khan; as she was returning to Hamadan from an adjacent garden, and he was so taken with her beauty that he determined at once to demand her in marriage of her father."

"Why truly, Sahib!" said Hussein, "report saith that a finer specimen of woman-kind exists not; the man whose anderoon shall be

brightened by her presence, may boast of possessing the most valuable jewel of Iran."

"But, alas, Hussein," said Moorad; "that jewel is kept close in its casket. By Ali, when my master offered to receive the Khanum into his anderoon, the Begler Beg actually gave a contemptuous refusal; he did so, by the head of the Shah."

"He must be a dewaneh," cried Hussein.

"A dewaneh!" returned the Koord; "why an ass possesses more sense; Mehtee Khan actually returned for answer, to the application of the Karah Kaplan, that he would never give his daughter to a robber on the highway."

"What!" ejaculated the muleteer, "does the Begler Beg forget the time when *he* drove sheep on the mountains. In those he would have been too happy to have made an addition to his income, by easing the subjects of his majesty, the Shah, of their spare cash and

baggage, even on the high-roads, had he dared to risk his life."

"Alas! it is too true," said Moorad, "Karah Kaplan, the lion-hearted, the bravest of the Koordish chiefs was actually told to eat dirt by a Hamadanee cow. By Mahomed! Mehtee Khan little suspects that he is about to be forced to swallow filth sufficient to choke a Muscovite."

"As I hope to drink more of this excellent wine," observed Hussein draining his third cup, "his father's grave is defiled."

"Well, now comes the pith of the story," continued the Koord: "my chieftain perceiving that fair words would avail nothing, must needs see how violence will aid his cause, for his highness is not a man to be baulked in love."

"And therefore," said Hussein, "has engaged me in assisting him to transplant the

loveliest rose of Hamadan to the black tent which comprises his anderoon."

"Aye," replied Moorad, "as much as the armourer who fashions the sword assists the warrior to slay his enemies. The Khan has certainly whitened your face in hiring you, but another would answer his purpose as well."

"I beg leave to doubt that," observed the muleteer, evidently nettled at the cheap rate at which his services were held.

"Go and be grilled," said the Koord, "who cares for your doubts? Only keep in mind that you are not hired for nothing, and then doubt as much as you please. But to continue, Allah Verdee Khan being bent on possessing the Khanum, after digging deep into the mines of his invention, bethought him of a scheme which, well worked out, must ensure success."

"Inshallah !" said Hussein, on whose brain the wine was beginning to take effect.

“The spring having commenced,” continued Moorad, “His Majesty the Shah has, according to annual custom, summoned all the governors of the towns and districts to meet him at the encampment near Sultaneah(13.) In obedience to this command Mehtee Khan is obliged to depart thither next week, attended by the greater part of his retinue, and as he will remain some time near the presence, he takes his harem with him. Now mark the point: the Khan proceeds a day or two in advance, and the anderoon, with the heavy baggage, follow at slow marches accompanied by a moderately sized guard. The first night the lady Zoraya rests at a village half a day’s journey distant from Hamadan and but a few fursuks from the mountain called the Falcon’s Nest. Now the Karah Kaplan, in order to avail himself of this opportunity of getting possession of the lady, has sent me thither in the disguise of a Chervador, with orders to hire myself to

Mehtee Khan's chief-ferash, and also to manage that the head-muleteer be in our pay. On my arrival at this town, I met with you, and thinking you were a likely man for my purpose, I have given you money in order to bribe the chief-ferash to hire your mules and make you head-muleteer, and I, for my part, have procured for myself *the high honour* of serving under you."

"And Mashallah!" said the muleteer, "when I see you brushing and cleaning the mules, I could have almost sworn that you had been accustomed to the business from your childhood. I must confess you perform your part well."

"Why," said his companion, "they do not seem to suspect me hitherto, and Inshallah! never will, until it is too late, for all is so arranged that nothing remains but to await with patience the departure of these people. On Saturday next the Khanum remains the

night at a small village; the next morning before dawn you must go round while the attendants are asleep and throw out the primings from their guns and pistols. After which, during the day's march as we turn the corner of the road by the Falcon's Nest, about three fursuks from your resting place, I will manage, unperceived, to lame the lady's horse; during the confusion caused by this occurrence, you must loosen the baggage of some of your mules, and call out for assistance; part of the retinue will turn back, and while they are assisting you to reload the animals, I will mount my horse and galloping at full speed to the front will shoot the attendant, who has hold of the lady's rein, with a pistol, which will be concealed during the march under my cloak, and then dashing up to the khanum herself, will seize and drag her from her horse and gallop off as fast as possible, while a small body of Allah Verdee Khan's

gholams(14) who will be waiting in the disguise of Persians near the spot, will at this signal attack the party in the confusion, put them to route and plunder the baggage."

"Bravo !" exclaimed Hussein, "and how will you act then?"

"I will proceed at full speed," returned Aga Moorad, "with my burden across the hills, to a spot called the *Maiden's Spring*, where His Highness the Karah Kaplan will be in readiness with a hundred horsemen, and once having arrived there, I would defy the world in arms to regain the girl. Bah ! would we not laugh at their beards?"

"An excellent plan !" observed Hussein, "but it has a defect ; you must be aware that the Maiden's Spring is full three fursuks of mountainous road from the Falcon's Nest, and I question whether that yahoo(15) of yours, which seems but a sorry beast, could carry you and your burden even at a footspace, the

whole of the distance, were the road—instead of being composed of mountainous and rocky passes—a maidân smooth as ice.”

“You were never more mistaken in your life,” said the Koord smiling at this disparagement of his steed. “A better and a stouter horse than Murwari(16) exists not. He would carry the weight of two full sized men, at the top of his speed, from Hamadan to the gates of Teheran. Have you not wit enough to perceive that it is so contrived, in order to avoid suspicion, that Murwari seems to have that half starved and lank appearance. It would scarcely be fitting for a common muleteer to possess a horse, which outward look would proclaim a Nejdee(17) origin.

“You are as clever in stratagem as an Is-pahanee,” observed the Chervador in admiration of his companion’s astuteness.

“Be it so,” replied the Koord; “but mind, Hussein, “you follow these injunctions to the

letter, else you will repent that you ever saw the light. Your situation of chief muleteer gives you access to the fire-arms of the retinue, and in the rendering those weapons useless, depends much of the success of the expedition, as but a small band of Koords can be in waiting at the Falcon's Nest, otherwise suspicion would be excited, and as several Tofinks(19,) will no doubt be aimed at my person, as I gallop off with my prize, it would be desirable that the contents should not be discharged."

"But what am I to do in the mean while," observed Hussein, "in order that I may remain scatheless during the chappow?"(20)

"You must wear a yellow handkerchief round your cap," answered Moorad, "and it being known who you are by that mark, you will remain unharmed, and when the affray is over, you must accompany the Koords, whither you will meet with the remainder of our party, and then you will receive your reward ;

but hist ! did you not hear a noise By Allah, something stirs in yonder corner.”

This was too true, for Ismael, intent on listening to the conversation, had placed his mouth close to the ground and had unfortunately breathed in some particles of loose chaff, which were lying scattered about, and which getting into his throat had caused him, notwithstanding the most violent efforts to restrain himself to give vent to a loud cough.

Moorad started to his feet, and seizing the lamp, proceeded to the spot where Ismael was lying. The light throwing its full blaze upon the figure of the old man, he became distinctly visible to the Koord and his companion; the former cast a withering glance on the cowering form before him, drew his dagger from its sheath, and grinding his teeth in desperation, exclaimed :

“ Haste, Hussein, guard the entrance; by Ali, we are betrayed.”

CHAPTER V.

Beauty is their own.
The feeling heart, simplicity of life
And elegance, and taste : the faultless form
Shaped by the hand of harmony ; the cheek
Where the live crimson, through the native white,
Soft shooting o'er the face diffuses bloom
And every nameless grace ; the parted lip
Like the red-rose bud moist with morning dew,
Breathing delight ; and, under flowing jet,
Or sunny ringlets, or of circling brown,
The neck slight-shaded,——,

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

THE house in which Mehtee Khan, the Begler Beg of Hamadan resided, was situated in the centre of an extensive garden about three hundred yards distant from the Tehran gate. After the usual manner of mansions belonging to Persians of rank, it was separated into two divisions, namely the beroon, (outer)

or men's apartments, and the anderoon (inner) or women's apartments. The entrance to the former was through a court thirty yards square, paved with flat stones, in the centre of which was a large tank of water, from whence played a fountain twenty feet in height. The windows of the dewaukhaneh(1) or public room, where the owner of the house was accustomed to transact the business of the day, looked upon this court and took up one whole side of the room they lighted, and being always open in the day-time, except during the cold weather, applicants for justice were wont to stand below, while the magistrate sat at the window and decided their causes. At the further end of this court was the door of the house leading into a cafsh(2) khaneh, on the right side of which was the entrance into the dewaukhaneh, while to the left were the other apartments and offices of the beroon. At the further end of the cafsh khaneh, was a door opening into a passage leading to the

women's apartments and which was the only internal communication between the beroon and anderoon.

The former of these was furnished in a simple manner; splendour and luxury being reserved for the harem, the outer entrance to which was through a court similar to the one above mentioned, but much larger and but partially paved, the remainder being laid out in grass plats, containing rose trees and shrubs of various kinds, and two marble tanks from which played divers fountains forming fantastic jets; this court opened into the garden, which was divided into two partitions by a high mud wall, one portion being reserved for the women, the other for the men, forming the household. The garden belonging to the harem was one of the most delicious spots in the kingdom, every species of fruit tree, every genus of flower peculiar to the country, abounded therein, and the season of the year being that of the Noroz, innumerable bulbuls(3) en-

livened the scene with their harmonious notes, while the rose trees being covered with flowers, both in bloom and bud, the most fragrant perfume pervaded the air.

The interior of the harem was of the most splendid description, and the principal chamber might have been cited as a model of Persian luxury, occupying a whole side of the square and furnished in the most costly manner. Turkish ottomans were arranged around, whose coverings were of the richest silks ; European mirrors were suspended against the walls, and the floor was spread with Khorasan(4) carpets and Hamadan nummuds. The ornamental portion of the chamber was composed chiefly of the gilded carving, in the working of which the natives of Persia excel. The frames which contained the windows were trellised in a most curious fashion, each opening in the work being filled with stained glass. At present, however, the shutters were lifted up, in order

that the inmates of the harem might enjoy the balmy air peculiar to the season of the year.

Before we proceed further in the description of this palace and its grounds, we will give a short account of its owner the Begler Beg. Mehtee Khan was a native of a village in the neighbourhood of Shiraz and the son of a Rayat, to whose humble occupation, that of tending sheep, he was brought up, and in which station he might have continued the whole of his life, had it not chanced that the Khan of the district, while returning one day from a hunting excursion passed by the spot where the boy was standing, and struck by his extreme beauty, inquired his name and origin, and being informed thereupon, immediately offered to take him into his service. The proposal was eagerly accepted by both the son and his parents, and Mehtee exchanged the humble garments of a shepherd for the more costly apparel of a pipe-bearer, in which capacity

he was engaged. From this epoch his good fortune had never deserted him, and he rose by the favour of his master from step to step, until he became nazir(5) of the household. In this situation, he remained until the death of the Khan, who bequeathed him in his will a large sum of money, which Mehtee was fortunate enough to secure. His parents being at this time both dead, and having no ties of relationship to bind him to the province of Fars,(6) he determined to seek his fortune in the capital, and accordingly proceeded to the court of the Shah, where, by the aid of his money, he procured a high situation among the Gholams; success continued to attend his exertions, and in the course of several years he was raised to the rank of Khan, and appointed Begler Beg of a town of minor importance.

He had previously married a most lovely Circassian girl, who had gained entire posses-

sion of his affections, for during her lifetime, she never had a rival in the anderoon.

By this wife, Mehtee Khan had two children, a son and a daughter, the former of whom was accidentally killed by a fall from a horse at the early age of thirteen. His mother, who was devotedly attached to him, never recovered the effects of this loss, but died shortly after, leaving Zoraya, (the twin sister of the boy) to the sole care of her remaining parent. Shortly after this melancholy event, Mehtee Khan was elevated to his present post at Hamadan, and being by this time possessor of enormous wealth, had purchased the garden described above, and had erected a magnificent palace upon the ground. Within the last year the Begler Beg had married again, but although his wife resided under the same roof with Zoraya, the latter remained perfect mistress of the establishment ; indeed, so idolized was she

by her father, that it was presumed, and with truth, that a word spoken by the daughter, expressing such a desire, would have been the signal of her stepmother's instant dismissal.

In consequence, Zoraya was treated with the utmost respect by all belonging to the household of the Begler Beg, and to her praise be it observed, that such respect was by no means extorted by fear, but originated in a genuine feeling of affection, as she was truly beloved by all who were in her service.

In the chief apartment of the magnificent anderoon belonging to the palace of her father, and gracefully reclining on the cushions of an ottoman, sat Zoraya, the daughter of Mehtee Khan, Begler Beg of Hamadan. Her veil and chauder(7) being laid aside, her beauty appeared to the fullest advantage, and whoever might have gazed upon her, must at once have confessed, that a more perfect specimen of the human form could scarcely have existed.

Her countenance, dazzling from the brilliant fairness of its complexion, which she inherited from her Circassian mother, was lovely in the extreme, not only from the regularity of its features, but from the angelic expression pervading it. Her eyes, which were dark and lustrous, would have been perhaps too piercingly bright had they not been fringed with long dark eyelashes, which gave them that feminine softness of appearance, which endears the owner alike to both sexes. Her hair was long and glossy, her eyebrows narrow and arched, her nose straight and small, her upper lip short and curled, while the lower was full and rosy, covering teeth of pearly hue. Her figure was exquisitely formed, being in perfect proportion with her height, which was slightly above the middle stature. She was habited in a tight vest of velvet, looped up with gold, and studded with jewels; a turban of Cashmere shawl covered

her head, the folds of which, interwoven with her long tresses, hung gracefully over her left shoulder. In the centre of the head-dress was a large diamond brooch, given to her by her mother upon her death-bed, with a charge always to wear it, as a charm against the Evil-eye.

Such was Zoraya, as she sat in her father's harem; such was the maiden whose beauty was the theme of many songs, throughout Iran, and the fame of whose beauty had conquered so many hearts. A manuscript with a richly ornamented binding, lying by her side, together with a Kalemdone,(8) and several scraps of paper with divers sentences written thereon, showed that her occupations were not those generally in fashion with Persian women; whose education, as far as literary pursuits are concerned, is much neglected, few being able to read, and fewer still to write. Zoraya, however, was far superior in this respect to her countrywomen;

she had read deeply and much, and many of the wisest Meerzas, would have been compelled to hide their diminished heads in shame, had they entered into disputation with her.

A few paces from the Begler Beg's daughter stood another female, whose respectful demeanour and attitude demonstrated her situation in life ; this was Nargis, the chief attendant, whose faithful services had much endeared her to Zoraya, who rewarded the attachment of the domestic, by placing the most unlimited confidence in her ; and Nargis was well deserving of her mistress's love, as her whole soul was wrapped up in anticipating her commands. The attendant was a fine specimen of Persian beauty ; about eighteen years of age, possessing the dark eyes and hair of her country in perfection, and had not her mistress been present, would have been considered beautiful ; but the superior loveliness of Zoraya threw

into the shade the charms of the less brilliant handmaid.

“ So then ’tis settled ;” said Zoraya, placing her hand upon her book, “ and we are to leave Hamadan on Shambah next ;(9) for my part, I am far from being pleased with the change.”

“ If I might be allowed to speak,” returned Nargis, “ I should ask permission to differ from you, Khanum ; my heart pants to behold such a wonderful spectacle as the camp at Sultaneah ; and then we shall be near the person of his majesty, (may Allah preserve and grant him long life) ; and you know, my Khanum, it is most fortunate to be near the threshold of the Shah ; besides which you will be continually paying visits, and making parties to the beautiful gardens in the neighbourhood : Mashallah ! it will be delightful !”

“ Ah ! my dear Nargis,” said her mistress, “ that giddy pate of thine runs upon nothing but gaiety ; for my part, I must fain confess

that the quiet of this anderoon, is far preferable to the prospect of being a cypher at the court; when I join the camp, I shall mix in the society of ladies, whose husbands and fathers are superior to mine in rank and power, and the deference with which I have ever been accustomed to be treated, will be transferred to others; my father too, though of great consequence here, will be totally eclipsed by the minions of the court."

"Afakerillah, Khanum!" observed the attendant in an animated tone, "never can it be possible that you should be disregarded. Look in yonder mirror,—who in this world can boast of such beauty as is reflected there?"

"It surprises me," said the maiden pretending not to observe the remark of her companion, "it surprises me that persons of the highest rank in the country, and who possess wealth sufficient to cause themselves to be accounted almost princes in their own towns,

should prefer hanging about the court and performing the duties of menials in the royal presence. It is a good thing to possess the Shah's confidence; riches and honours flow in a plenteous stream into the coffers of the courtier as long as the royal eye looks favourably upon him; but all the gifts of fortune may be rendered useless, by one glance of evil destiny; a whim of the Shah's; the caprice of a moment may cause a favourite vizier to lose his head, and the face which was whitest in the morning, may ere noon be defiled with dirt. The shoulders on which the kalaat(10) lay lately in graceful fold, may suddenly be rubbing the ground with the feet of the sycophant higher than his head; ah! as long as I live, it will be my most earnest prayer, that my father keep aloof from the bustle of courts."

"Khanum, Khanum!" exclaimed Nargis, surveying the moralising damsel with surprise,

“ what words are these ; it would be no easy matter to conceive, by your discourse, that you were a Persian maiden ; methinks you would better grace a synod of Moolahs, for, in truth you can perform many things of which the Khanums of Iran know not even the existence. You can read the Koran better than the Mooshtehed himself, and Saadi, Hafiz, and Ferdousi are at your fingers’ ends.”

“ One circumstance I know,” interrupted Zoraya, smiling, “ that a more giddy, rattle-brained, talkative damsel than thyself, exists not ; I believe you would expire, were I to order you to remain silent for an hour.”

“ Nay,” returned the attendant reproachfully, “ a command of thine, were it to make me dumb for life, would never extract a murmur from my breast. I love you too devotedly for that.”

“ I know it, my Nargis ;” said Zoraya, affec-

tionately, "I have great reliance on your attachment, and believe it to be sincere; but see, some one approaches."

The curtain that concealed the door was pushed aside, and a young girl entered the apartment, who making a profound inclination of the body, remained in a respectful attitude, waiting to be addressed.

"What is the matter, Fatimá?" demanded Zoraya of the Kaneez.(11)

"So please you, madam, the Lady Zofea has sent to inquire, whether you can receive her this morning; as she desires the honour of paying her respects, to you."

"'Tis well," answered the maiden; "inform her that her presence will make me happy;—her coming is fortunate."

Fatima repeated the salaam she had made on entering, and departed with the message.

"I did you wrong, my Nargis," said Zoraya, as the curtain fell, "when I asserted that a

more talkative creature than yourself breathes not. I forgot the Khanum Zofea, whose tongue moves faster than the limbs of the swiftest gazel."

"But at the same time," answered Nargis, "where will you find one better acquainted with what is going forward in the world; not an incident occurs that she does not attain to the knowledge of—be it scandal, or politics. I confess, it delights me much to listen to her conversation; she is ever the bearer of so much entertaining news."

"Her society is amusing enough for a short hour," said the maiden; "but to reside within the same anderoon, would be insupportable. I pity her poor husband, his is no quiet life; but hark! she comes."

The curtain again rose, and a little bustling woman entered the apartment, attended by several Kaneezes.

Zoraya rose to receive the new comer, who,

throwing herself into the arms of the maiden, kissed her affectionately on each cheek and commenced a volley of the usual Persian salutations ; having, at length come to a pause from want of breath, she was requested to be seated.

“Mashallah ! Jaunum,(12) Azezmi,”(13) she continued, on recovering her speech, “how beautiful you appear this morning, what a bloom is on your countenance ! If I did not know to the contrary, I should swear that you were indebted to art, for your colour ; but as I am a Persian woman, not an atom of paint has ever approached that lovely cheek. Well, well ! your husband will be a fortunate man.”

The idea of painting might well have been uppermost in the imagination of the speaker, as her cheeks and brow presented one mass of colours, daubed on with little attention to neatness ; her eyebrows, not chancing to meet naturally, were joined by a thick line of rang,(14)

and her lips might certainly have vied with the *Orange* in the vividness of their glow. In person Zofea was very short, and much inclined to obesity; indeed, she bid fair to become, before a great lapse of time, as broad as she was long. Her years might have been with justice fixed at thirty-five, but it evidently was her wish to be thought, at least ten years under that age; her dress was composed of the richest silks and Cashmere shawls, and the jewels that plentifully bedecked her person, were of such value, as to convince the beholder that her husband must have been a person of great wealth, and had a proper respect for his wife's authority; indeed, it was rumoured, that Taki Khan, although a man of great consequence in the assembly, partook plentifully of his wife's slipper, when within the precincts of the Harem.

There was one point in which the countenance of Zofea excelled: her eyes, which were large

and sparkling, possessed such an expression of intelligence, as to atone much for the numerous defects of her person, nor did the owner of those eyes belie their evidence ; sagacious in the extreme, and possessing far more penetration and good sense than the generality of her countrywomen, she upheld the glory of her husband's house, who acting entirely by her counsels, had steered successfully through the difficult mazes of a court life ; indeed, Taki Khan well deserved some recompense to atone for the sufferings which his ears underwent, from the incessant talking of his wife, whose chief fault consisted in her garrulity. Nevertheless, unlike most persons whose words flow apace, Zofea was an acute observer of passing occurrences. The extent of her knowledge was prodigious, and on all matters, whether public or private, none were better or more accurately informed. She had by degrees caused her spouse to put away all his other

wives, and now reigned paramount and rivalless in the anderoon. Such is the description of the lady who addressed the daughter of Begler Beg.

“ Really, Khanum, your compliments are numerous this morning ;” answered the maiden, to the observations of her visitor, “ but as for my husband being a fortunate man, Inshallah ! it will be long ere I am called a wife.”

“ Nay, Dillum,”(15) replied Zofea, “you jest; your mouth utters what your heart refuses to respond to. Is it not so, Nargis ?” she continued addressing the attendant.

“ Pardon me Khanum,” answered Nargis, “ you must give my mistress credit for her assertion ; such is invariably her answer, when the idea of a husband is started ; for she says, that her happiness here is so unalloyed, that it would be folly to banter her present condition, as Banoo(16) of the anderoon, for a situa-

tion in which some other wife may, perchance, usurp the first place in her husband's affections."

"You say true," said the maiden; "I can never wed with the uncertainty of being the sole object of my spouse's love."

"And what interferes to prevent your being that object, Jaunum?" observed the matron. "Surely one possessing your charms, might be sure of reigning paramount in her Lord's Harem. Why, when I was married I soon caused Taki Khan, to clear his anderoon of all the rubbish I discovered there; and when one like myself succeed so well, Zoraya, the daughter of the Begler Beg of Hamadan, the most influential Khan of the province;—Zoraya, the handsomest maiden of Persia, need not despond."

"Nevertheless, my Zofea," said the maiden, "I have made up my mind to remain single, for the present. My father has never thwarted

my inclinations ; but whenever my hand has been requested in marriage, has given way to my desire of remaining a maiden, in the paternal anderoon."

" Mehtee Khan has acted thus," said Zofea ; " because he hath considered none of your suitors worthy of the honour. When he refused Almas Khan, and the Shigaugee Chief, it was in anticipation of a higher offer ; even Allah Verdee Khan, the Koord did not satisfy him.

" O name not the monster !" ejaculated Zoraya, with a look of horror ; " who would desire to bestow a beloved daughter on a cut-throat, a robber, a Lootee like Allah Verdee, the Karah Kaplan ! May Mahomed preserve me from such a terrible fate."

" You are severe, my sweet one ;" said her friend ; " for my part I have ever heard Karah Kaplan spoken of in terms of admiration ; and understand his wealth to be enormous."

“Zofea,” said the Begler Beg’s daughter, “methought, you had too much sense to imagine, that riches alone can cause happiness ; are you not aware, that besides enriching himself by the plunder of caravans, and murdering the unfortunate merchants, who travel on the roads, infested by his band, he is reported to have laid violent hands on such of his wives as have ceased to please him. Sooner would I be in my grave than in the power of such a monster.”

“Do not be alarmed Jaunum,” replied Zofea, “such a destiny awaits you not ; but come, I deserve a majdahlak(17) in return for the good news I am about to unfold.”

“What news ?” asked Zoraya.

“It will change your intention of remaining single,” continued the matron. “Listen attentively and rejoice ; His Royal Highness, Mahomed Reza Meerza, Prince Governor of the

province is about to demand your hand in marriage."

"Nay, surely you jest," said the maiden.

"I jest not, my blooming friend," returned Zofea, "I had the news from the mouth of the Prince's mother; and now having heard this, does not your intention of remaining single begin to waver?"

"By no means," replied the lovely girl, with animation; "I view the prospect of such an alliance with abhorrence, were I indeed, the wife of a simple subject, I might hope to have authority in the anderoon, and to reign there without a rival, sole possessor of my husband's heart; but, wedded to a Shah Zadeh(18) such a thing would be impossible, I shall certainly decline the honour intended for me."

"But," said her friend, "do you suppose that Mehtee Khan will allow you a voice in

the affair. It was easy to refuse your former suitors, but it would be dangerous to give a dissentient answer to the proposal of a king's son ; it were as much as your father's place, if not his life, were worth."

Zoraya, struck with the palpable truth contained in the last remark of her visitor, remained silent, and gave signs of great emotion.

" Ajaib ! wonderful !" exclaimed Nargis, dazzled by the brilliant prospect of her mistress becoming a prince's bride ; "you surely cannot dislike such an offer ; remember the illustrious rank and power of Mahomed Reza Meerza, who, some future day, may be King of Persia. Oh ! what an envied lot must be that of the favourite wife of the Shah, and such there is no doubt of your becoming ; for who, be she Circassian, Georgian, or Persian, can compare with you, my mistress ? By the head of Ali, you cannot fail to be the Banoo of Mahommed Reza's anderoon."

“ Never,” said the maiden, with firmness, “ never will I enter an anderoon, where, for a short time, perhaps, I may possess my lord’s affection, and then be laid aside and neglected, like an old garment, in order to make way for a newer and consequently more grateful object.”

“ Alas, my life !” cried Zofea struck by the decision manifested in the latter words of the maiden, “ I hardly thought my tidings would have proved so unwelcome, but still I fear, as I said before, that you will scarcely be allowed a voice in the affair, and I must observe that you are the only Persian girl I know, whose heart would fail to bound with rapture in anticipation of becoming a royal bride.”

“ You may perhaps laugh at me, Zofea,” returned the maiden ; “ but I have vowed never to bestow my hand without my heart ; in short, unless I love and am beloved in return, deeply and fervently, I will never marry,

and I cannot foresee how such an occurrence can be brought about in this country."

"Ha! ha! the truth comes out at last;" laughingly observed the matron. "I see how such notions, so unheard of in Persia, have entered that little head of yours; you are continually poring over those volumes which tell of Frank customs, and you wish to follow the examples there inculcated. Do you plead guilty or not!"

"Zofea," said the Begler Beg's daughter blushing at the charge. "I own that I have read much concerning the countries of the Frangistan,(19) and truly I cannot be far wrong when I assert, that although the inhabitants thereof are infidels and deny the blessed prophet, still in whatever concerns love and marriage, they seem to understand the nature of happiness better than the true believers."

"I also have heard of those countries from

whence come the smoothed-chinned Faringeers," said Zofea, "and I own that the law is most sensible, which binds a man to a single wife at a time. I confess also that the liberty which the women are reported to enjoy in those distant lands, would give rise to the supposition of their being happier than we, who are obliged to veil from the gaze of man."

"It is not the latter privilege I desire," replied Zoraya; "to expose the face to the unhallowed gaze of all, is repugnant to a maiden's idea of modesty; but it is in the communion between two kindred spirits that they are blessed. The Frank maiden sees her lover before marriage, and is able to form an opinion of his character, and to discover whether he is fitted to make her happy; but we, the followers of the true religion, are given away in marriage, almost unconsulted, and the husband's anderoon is generally the first place, where

those joined in wedlock meet together. Alas, the Persian girl goes to the nuptial couch as a sheep to the slaughter."

"I must observe, Azezim," said the matron, "that you have filled your head with curious ideas, and I wish for your sake that you had never pored over those musty volumes, which are fit company for none but meerzas and priests. Remember this is not Frangistan, and therefore you are not likely to find your wish fulfilled, of meeting your lover before marriage, in order to find out whether you are congenial spirits."

"Then, as I have before asserted," said Zoraya, "I will remain single. But let us change this subject, it is irksome for me to con over the tidings you have brought. Here, Fatima, Khatoon," she continued addressing the kaneezes, "bring kaliauns and tea."

The attendants busied themselves at this

order, and presently the richly ornamented waterpipes were presented to the two ladies, who, for a few minutes, remained busied in inhaling the smoke thereof, and making the apartment echo with the bubbling sound of the disturbed water.(20)

“ By the bye,” observed Zofea, returning the kaliaun to the pipe-bearer, “ are you aware of the *honour* intended for you by an Eliaut yesterday evening. By the head of Ali, it has made me laugh ever since I heard of the circumstance.”

“ What honour, Jaunum ?” said Zoraya, “ I have heard nothing.”

Zofea proceeded to give an account of Ismael's visit to the Begler Beg, the circumstances concerning which had come to her knowledge that morning ; of course, the narration was accompanied by all kinds of exaggerations and embellishments consequent

on their having travelled from mouth to mouth, and those mouths belonging to Persian women.

“Mashallah!” observed Nargis on hearing the account, “yon Eliaut must either be a dewaneh, or the most impudent of his tribe. Fancy his even daring to imagine that his son was worthy of sweeping the dust from your carpets. By Ali, methinks your father suffered the padersookhteh to escape too easily. I wish they had allowed me to allot the quantum of punishment due to the boaster; surely the tongue which uttered such extravagance ought to have been cut out.”

“Nay, Nargis, be not so cruelly disposed,” said the maiden. “If affection for his son prompted the old man to the conduct he has pursued, so far from feeling anger, I reverence his boldness; and with respect to the youth, surely it is not a crime of great magnitude to love, although the object of his adoration be of so much higher station than the lover.”

“ Barakillah !” exclaimed Zofea laughing, “ I declare you are actually disposed to fall in love with this young fellow. Aye, surely,” she continued in a sarcastic tone, “ it is fitting that she who scorns the alliance of a prince, should wish to bestow herself upon a Rayat. Here, Nargis, you had better prepare for the nuptials at once, as this offer seems to be so highly valued.”

“ Zofea,” cried the maiden, reddening with anger, “ you are too pointed in your remarks ; the intimacy which has subsisted between us, gives you no title to insult me ; repeat such words again and our friendship ends for ever.”

“ Pardon, pardon, khanum,” replied Zofea who perceived that she had gone too far, “ I have eaten dirt—I did but jest.”

“ Such jests, madam, are hard to bear,” replied the maiden haughtily ; “ and I request they be not repeated.”

“ My soul—my life,” said Zofea, “ never

again shall my speech offend ; but say that I am pardoned for my inadvertency. Surely anger will never rankle in a breast like thine, particularly against your tried friend, Zofea.”

With these words the matron arose, and threw her arms around her lovely companion ; Zoraya, who had been seriously offended, for a moment received her caresses with coldness, but her natural good temper getting the better of her wrath, she returned her companion’s embrace, at the same time observing that the cause of offence was forgotten.

The conversation now turned upon other topics more common among Persian women of rank, and after examining and admiring each others dresses and jewels, the two friends had just made an appointment to meet each other at the bath on the following day, when a most tremendous uproar was heard proceeding from the beroon of the house.

Although it was no uncommon occurrence

to hear loud noises in that quarter of the building on account of its being a court of justice, where sentences were not only given but executed in the presence of the judge, still the disturbance was of such unusual violence, and the voice of the Begler Beg was distinguished so high above the rest, as to excite great alarm among the inmates of the anderoon, Zoraya therefore directed some of her attendants to proceed to the outer court in order to ascertain the origin of the disturbance.

The command was obeyed by several of the kaneezes present, whose curiosity being excited, rushed in a body from the apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

And yet he thinks—ha, ha, ha, ha!—he thinks
I am the tool and servant of his will!
Well, let it be; through all the maze of trouble
His plots and base oppression must create,
I'll shape myself a way to higher things,
And who will say 'tis wrong?

BASIL, a Tragedy.

WE left the old Eliaut shepherd, cowering under the menacing eye of the Koord; who, having directed Hussein to watch the entrance to the stable, proceeded to seize the prostrate Ismael by the throat, and in a suppressed, but exasperated voice, exclaimed, "Vile dog! offspring of a dog still viler! grandfather of defiled children! how dare you enact the spy upon my actions? By the head of Ali,

you shall repent you of your temerity ; for you survive not to report what you have overheard.”

With these words, he raised his cummar, and prepared to strike it into the old man's throat ; who, nearly overcome by terror, gave way to the following disjointed exclamations :—

“ Aman ! aman ! what have I done, Sahib ? what dirt have I been eating, that I should be murdered in cold blood ?—Who is your miserable slave that he should play the spy upon you ! As I am a true believer, I am ignorant of having committed any crime.”

“ Son of a slave !” replied Moorad, still menacing the Eliaut with his dagger, “ do you deny having listened to our conversation ?”

“ What conversation ?” said Ismael, slightly recovering his presence of mind, and putting on an appearance of simplicity, “ what words are these, mine Aga ? I have this instant awakened from sleep ; for the love of your

children, as you are a good mussulman, kill not an aged and innocent man, who has done nothing to deserve such a fate."

Mo orad gazed steadfastly on the face of the Eliaut for several seconds, as if undetermined how to act; but at length muttering to himself, "'Tis well, perhaps the old fool knows nothing; I will spare his life." He released Ismael from his gripe, and calling to Hussein to return; observed, "Look you, old man; my friend and I have been drinking wine,(1) and we were somewhat fearful, you had come hither and concealed yourself, in order to watch our proceedings, and to give information against us, before the Daroga.(2) This may explain the cause of my late anger; for which, I am content to confess myself in fault. Here," he continued pouring out some of the liquor into his cup, "drink yourself, and see whether we have not some excuse, for breaking the laws of the Koran."

Ismael shrunk from the proffered cup. "Mahomed is the prophet," he ejaculated, "I drink no wine ; tempt me not."

"Nay, friend," observed the Koord, "we accept no refusal ; on the contrary, whether willing or unwilling, you must drink ; for then you will have transgressed the law yourself, and dare not inform against *us* ; drink, and be thankful for the draught."

Ismael still hesitated, but perceiving that Moorad had laid hold of the handle of his cummar, he drained the cup of its contents ; inwardly requesting pardon, for the crime he was thus forced to commit.

"Barakillah !" said Moorad, noticing the disgust which pervaded the countenance of the shepherd, after the deed had been committed, "as I am a true believer, the old hypocrite would fain pretend the liquor is bad, and draws up his wrinkles as if he had tasted of the unclean beast. Mine Aga !" continued he,

turning to the Eliaut, with mock respect, "I am sorry the wine is not to your liking; your slave begs to represent, that the best of Shiraz's grapes were used in the vintage; pray what in reality is your excellency's opinion?"

"Thou scoffing unbeliever," returned Ismael in a fury, "cease your taunts; it is sufficient that you have forced me to eat dirt, without adding to the insult by mockery. Leave me, if you are a man and not a devil, and disturb me no more with your impiety."

"Ha! ha!" answered the Koord unabashed at the reproof, "methinks old man, you should don the turban of a Moolah, with such sanctified notions in your brain. Come, Hussein, let us begone, else we shall be infected by his hypocrisy. Pah! I spit upon it."

The Chervador, at this order, proceeded to gather together the remains of the repast, and prepared to accompany his disguised companion from the spot; who whispering as they

approached the door, observed, "Well, Hussein, I trust all is safe; Inshallah! yonder ass, with a burnt father, has not overheard our plot; but notwithstanding, I did well to pretend, that my rage was excited by being discovered in the act of drinking wine; 'tis better I extinguished not, the breath of life which animates that withered lump of clay."

By this time the Koord and his companion had reached the door, and were on the point of making their exit; when the former stopping, shook his head, and shutting his teeth close together, exclaimed, "It were safer to make certain of his silence;" and returning to the spot where Ismael was standing, put on one of the fiercest expressions which his countenance was capable of assuming, and pointing to his dagger, said in a stern voice:—

"Old man, who you are, or whether you have really overheard our conversation, I know not; but be this as it may, mark me,

not a word of what has happened this night, or thou diest. Should I hear of your babbling I will find you out, were you buried a hundred feet below the level of the earth ; or if worlds should separate us, I will not taste of the sweets of repose, until I am revenged on thy polluted carcase ; so beware of your tongue, or——” At this pause he significantly pointed to his dagger, and quitting the stable, left Ismael to meditate on the extraordinary occurrences of the night.

No sooner had the sound of the retreating footsteps ceased, than the Eliaut, seizing hold of his cloak, hurried in the utmost trepidation from the stable, in which his rest had been so terrifically broken upon. On finding himself in the open air, he breathed more freely, and offered up a thanksgiving for his deliverance ; after which he gave vent to his feelings against the Koord.

“ May his hearth be defiled,” he said.

“ May his family perish, may his body wither ; the infidel, the scoffer, the murderer, to dry up my liver with such abuse ; but his audacity shall not go unpunished, for I will be even with him. He may think himself a Locman, but I will let him know that I am the father of Locmans. He fancies he has deceived me, and that I have not overheard his diabolical plot ; but he shall discover, that old as I am, I can outwit even him. I thank thee, my good fortune, for having made me an humble instrument for preventing the designs of these defiled Koords from taking effect. To-morrow morning I will go again to the Begler Beg, and see whether he will receive me more graciously now, that I come with a different tale in my mouth. Inshallah ! when I unfold the danger which threatens his daughter, he may reward me, by regarding my son with the eyes of favour.”

Although it was midnight, Ismael took his

departure from the caravanseraï, inwardly vowing never to set foot again within its walls, and directing his steps to another building of the same description, sought out a spot where he might pass the remainder of the night in peace.

CHAPTER VII.

“ Why have you come back to plague me.”

SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.

ABOUT two hours before noon, the public court, in front of the house of Mehtee Khan, presented its usually daily bustle : on one side with large bundles of sticks, and the awful felek(1) lying near, stood a band of ferashes, dread ministers of their master's will, and ever ready to execute the most fearful commands. These men were easily to be distinguished by the ferocity of their looks, and a certain recklessness of manner. Several unhappy

criminals were in their custody, chained hand and foot, awaiting, in dire suspense, the expected judgment of the Begler Beg, when that minister of justice should appear.

At a short distance from this group was another of very different appearance, consisting of several pishkidmuds(2) and pipe-bearers filling the kaliauns of their master and his visitors with water from a tank in the centre of the court. These attendants were exceedingly well dressed, their long kabaus were of the best Glasgow chintz; around their waists they wore shawls from the looms of Kermán(3) and Tabreez, the hues and workmanship of which, viewed from a short distance, vied with the manufactures of Cashmere; clean striped woollen socks covered their feet, which were inserted in high-heeled green slippers of shagreen leather; over their shoulders they

wore cloaks of *European cloth*, enams bestowed upon them at the Noroz(4) by their masters, according to annual custom.

These domestics in general wore their beards either cut close to their chin, or but a few inches in length ; and their back curls protruding from their lambskin caps, were trimmed with the greatest attention to neatness. Of such persons consisted the group of pishkidmuds, who having finished preparing their Lord's kaliauns entered the house in a long string, headed by the chief kaliaungee of the Begler Beg.

To the right hand of the court were several persons, who having disputed with each other, had come to the Salaam in order to obtain justice. This last was by far the most uproarious party, as many of them were engaged in violent altercations with each other.

Besides the above mentioned groups, were

many idlers and loiterers near the doors, whom curiosity and the lack of any regular occupation had drawn thither.

It would have been an entertaining sight for a stranger to have watched the busy scene the Salaam presented; the gloomy and ferocious countenances of the ferashes, the anxious and dejected looks of the criminals, and the animation and fire visible in the gestures of the disputants, presented a fit subject for a painter's skill.

Suddenly a commotion was visible near the house door; it was caused by the departure of several visitors from the palace, prior to their host proceeding to take his seat in the dewaukhaneh; these visitors were four in number; hand in hand with another nobleman came Taki Khan, a man of large stature, and great corpulency; as Viziere Nizam(5) of Hamadan, he was a personage of much consequence in the district; but although his authority was

mighty abroad, it was reported to be much curtailed at home ; indeed rumour asserted that he was under severe discipline, as soon as he entered the precincts of his anderoon ; it could not, however, be denied that he owed his high station and long continuance therein, to his wife's sagacity and forethought, for it was by following her advice in every respect, that Taki Khan had steered clear of the troubles incidental to men of his rank. The companion with whom he was walking, was a little sharp-eyed Ispahanee, whose countenance presented a mixture of shrewdness and knavery, nor did his face give false evidence of the character of the man. Sprung from the very lowest grade of society, Meerza Sadek was at present the favorite counsellor of Mahomed Reza Meerza, the Prince Governor of the province, to which high situation he had raised himself by a humorous flow of wit, and a tongue which knew how to flatter at the right season. Behind

these great men walked two khans of inferior rank, of whom being characters by no means unusual in Persia, we will not make mention ; but merely observe, that they were most determined parasites of the little Meerza, and his more bulky companion. Following their masters, came a long train of attendants bearing kaliauns, and making bustle sufficient to uphold the dignity of their lords.

As this party were passing by the group of ferashes, one of the criminals in custody burst from the crowd, and throwing himself at the feet of Meerza Sadek, exclaimed "Aman ! Aman ! Meerza, for the love of Allah intercede for me, else I shall be killed," on hearing these words, the Meerza paused, and looking contemptuously at the applicant for mercy, replied in a cold tone, "Well, Ali Acma what can I do."

"Why is not your excellency aware that I am accused of theft," said the criminal, "and have been brought hither, in order to be tor-

tured into confession ; and by the head of Ali I am not guilty.”

“ Aye, I have no doubt of your readiness to make oath of your innocence, were any but violent means used for inciting you to confess ; look you, Ali Acma, I know you for an arrant rascal, and in my opinion, a slight acquaintance with the felek will do you no harm.”

“ O ! my Lord, say not so,” answered the suppliant, in an agony of fear. “ As you are a man, leave me not to my fate.”

“ I can do nothing for you,” said the Meerza, beginning to move on, “ except to advise you to screw up your courage to its highest pitch, for I know Mehtee Khan’s ferashes are no bad hands at managing their stick.”

“ Sahib ! Sahib !” cried Ali Acma, “ will nothing move you to take compassion on me ; remember what excellent service I have often done you ; and suppose I were to let out all I know, O Meerza, it might do you no good.”

This last sentence was spoken in an under tone, so as to be only heard by the person spoken to; on whose countenance it had an immediate effect, and for an instant Meerza Sadek changed colour; but quickly recovering himself, he fixed a look of calm contempt on the wretched man; and addressing him in the same tone of voice, muttered, "Ali Acma, you have done for yourself; those words have sealed your fate. Ferashes!" he continued aloud, "spare not this fellow, when you are called to perform your duty upon him. A greater Loozee(6) and liar breathes not; I have not the slightest doubt of his swearing a whole tissue of falsehoods about myself; therefore, spare him not; let him be choked with the filth that has accumulated about him."

Meerza Sadek, having thus spoken, rejoined his companions, and left the court; the loiterers at the gate respectfully making way for the party.

The Begler Beg's friends had not long quitted the house, when that functionary himself, attended by his Meerza, entered the dewaukhaneh. His coming was followed by a breathless silence; until looking over a list which he held in his hand, he called out to a couple of disputants, to state their cause of quarrel. Then broke out, with redoubled violence, the vociferations of the claimants for justice, each party protesting that he was in the right, and accusing each other of eating dirt, and of being defiled, and using many other phrases of abuse peculiar to the language of the East.

Great as appeared the confusion, Mehtee Khan, being well accustomed to his business, soon put a termination to the wrangling; and having decided the causes of the disputants, in a summary manner, he turned his attention to the criminal cases, which were awaiting his judgment. Several minor offenders having

been more or less punished by fines or stripes, the culprit who had entreated Meerza Sadèk to intercede for him, was brought forward, and accused of purloining a bale of silk, from a caravanserai in the city. The prisoner stoutly denied the act; but the evidence of several witnesses going much against him, he was sentenced to be tied to the felek, in order that, under the pain of the bastinado, he might be induced to confess and give up his accomplices; the command was about to be carried into execution, when a letter was delivered into the hands of Mehtee Khan, who having perused its contents, countermanded the judgment, and directed the accused to be taken back to prison, until further orders. The cases of the day having now come to a determination, the Begler Beg was on the point of quitting the dewaukhaneh, and retiring to his anderoon, when a tumult was heard outside the door of the court, and Ismael bursting through a crowd

of attendants, who vainly attempted to keep him back, presented himself before the astonished magistrate, and in a hasty manner, commenced a recital of the occurrences of the preceding night; but before he could proceed further than the first sentence he was interrupted by Mehtee Khan, who supposed that he was come on the same business as the preceding day.

“ Here, Bachahau,” he exclaimed in a voice rendered so loud by excess of fury, that it might have been heard from a great distance; “ this old fool has again come hither, despite my warning of yesterday. Ferashes! seize the dotard, and give him the sticks. By my father’s soul, we are somebody here, and will not allow this ass to laugh at our beards with impunity. Quick! as you value your skins, tie him to the felek.”

The unfortunate Ismael in vain attempted to be heard; in vain he struggled to free him-

self from the executioner's grasp ; he was instantly thrown on his back, his slippers and stockings torn off, and his naked feet inserted in the dreadful noose.

“Aman!” he ejaculated as the bundle of sticks were brought out, and untied, preparatory to the punishment. Mercy ! mercy ! O ! Begler Beg, as you are a man, let me speak. By Ali, by Mahomed, your daughter——wahi ! wahi !”

This last exclamation was caused by the first blows that fell on his bare soles. A couple of ferashes had lifted up the pole, until the feet of the sufferer were high in the air, and two other men standing face to face on either side of the felek, administered the bastinado, bestowing the blows alternately.

“Strike the dog's son,” roared out the Begler Beg ; “spare him not, strike as long as a stick remains : the defiled ass ! the unclean swine ! Strike, I say,” he continued while his

eyes almost started from their sockets, so violent was his rage ; “ as you value your souls, strike hard, though you kill the wretch.”

The ferashes obeyed, to the utmost of their power, the commands of their master ; blow upon blow, fell on the miserable Ismael ; nor did the Khan desire the executioners to desist, until the sufferer’s feet presented one mass of swollen flesh. On being loosened from the felek, the half fainting shepherd was born from the court, by the attendants of the Khan, who observed, as the men were lifting him up for that purpose :—

“ Idiot as you are, you will scarcely again presume to insult the Begler Beg, to his very face ; methinks you have had a reception which ought to divert your brain from entertaining such lofty ideas, as imagining yourself greater than you are. May you be defiled, if you play the dewaneh here again. Here, bear him from

my presence, carry him beyond the city walls, and give instructions to the gate keepers, never to admit him more. Go !”

The Eliaut scarcely heeded these words; he was half fainting from the violence of the discipline he had undergone, and groaning with anguish, he was borne away. Some humane persons outside, not heeding the last injunctions of the Mehtee Khan, took him from the ferashes, who willingly resigned their burden, and bore him to a house near at hand, in order to dress his wounds.

After Ismael's departure, the Begler Beg, fortunately for those around him, became quiet, as some of the attendants feared that they should suffer from the wrath of their master, for not having prevented the entrance of the Eliaut; however, the violent paroxysm of rage, that had seized upon the Khan, had blown over, and gradually

subsided into a calm : a puff from his kaleoon completed the soothing of his agitated nerves, and rising, he retired to the interior of the Manzel.(7)

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh qual voce al cor mi piomba,
V' è un giudizio oltre la tomba
V'e tremendo un punitor !

LA MARESCIALLA D'ANCRE.

THE scene must now change to another quarter of the city. In a small, but richly furnished apartment, and perusing some papers with great attention, sat Meerza Sadek. Ever and anon, a sneer curled his upper lip, and a self-satisfied smile played over his features. Although he was alone, the thoughts excited by his occupation broke out in disjointed exclamations, such as “Mashallah !

it is well done. Barakillah ! my head will be exalted ! I shall soon be the first man in the kingdom ! O admirable ! it certainly has been well planned ! May happiness attend the Shah ; he has a right good friendship for me ! See, what is this ? O ! my list of subscribers, as I call them ; the sycophants, how they strive to earn a good name from me. Still, Almas Khan, you are not going on well, I have received no present from you these three months ; curses on your soul ! I spit upon you ; do you think you will gain by your economy ; or do you despise the friendship of Meerza Sadek ; if such is your opinion, you are a fool. Ha ! Nooree Khan, how comes it that your presents to my house have been so small of late ? May your liver be dried up, for a miserly wretch ; keep a watch over your fortunes ; when you cease to court me properly, you ought to look to the foundations of your house. Meerza Ibrahim, Meerza Synd, Salee Khan, there is

an evident falling off in your offerings hitherward; do you imagine my influence on the wane? O! little men, how mistaken are you: I could hurl you all from your seats, and defile your wives. Woe to those that neglect me; it were better to insult me outright, like *my worthy* and *esteemed* friend Mehtee Khan. By Ali, the vengeance I am preparing against him, will be a warning to others. By the by, it is the time I appointed, for yon fool Ali Acma to be brought hither. I had once been of a mind to leave him to his destiny, but I doubt not that the fright he has undergone, will deter him from again attempting to pull at his bridle! Here, Bachahau,(1) without there."

These last words were uttered aloud, and a pishkidmud having entered at the call, the Meerza inquired, whether Ali Acma had arrived; the attendant having answered in the affirmative, his master observed, "Bring him here."

“Bachesm !” retorted the pishkidmud ; who retired, and presently returned with the identical criminal, who had been accused at the Begler Beg’s salaam, of purloining a bale of silk.

“Ha,” observed the Meerza, sarcastically, “you have whitened your face ; not being contented with disobeying my injunctions, you have committed a robbery, and not even satisfied with that, you threaten me with, I know not what, unless I get you off.”

“Wahi Sahib,” returned the man, “may I be grilled if I am guilty of the theft ; may my right hand wither if I stole the silk.”

“Well, I am aware you did not,” said Meerza Sadek, “I knew it long ago ; but if you will be refractory, after all my kindness to you and refuse to execute my commands, it is necessary you should learn, how I can burn your father ; the bale of silk was taken by my commands, and placed in your house.”

“And wherefore, Sahib,” said Ali Acma, in astonishment, “why should you wish to ruin me.”

“Fool,” returned the other, “did I not tell you to make an accusation against Mehtee Khan, and did you not refuse, by saying that your conscience would not suffer you to perjure yourself; conscience indeed! a bazar Lootee to talk of conscience; why had it been a deed of stabbing or robbery, you would have said bachesm! on the instant, and now when I merely require you to take a false oath, you talk of conscience; pshaw, man, what hypocrisy is this?”

“Alas, Sahib,” replied the Lootee, “by my father’s head you do me wrong, when you accuse me of hypocrisy. I am no hypocrite; I confess when my blood has been roused, I have taken the life of more than one of my fellow creatures; but, Sahib, there is a difference between the excitement of hot blood, and

coolly taking a false oath ; when the words of the priests proclaiming damnation ring in the ear, when one is about to swear on the Koran, it makes the most hardened sinner tremble. O Sahib, bid me perform any other act, and I am your slave ; but force me not to swear a false oath on the Koran ; I dare not.(2)

“ Barakillah, most excellent man,” said Meerza Sadek calmly ; “ you speak like a Locman ; let us see whether you possess the courage of a Rustum ; for, by the head of the Shah, you will have occasion for it.”

“ In the name of the blessed Imams, O Sahib,” cried Ali Acma, “ what mean you ?”

“ Do you feel inclined to have your toe-nails knocked off in the felek,” replied the Meerza ; “ for as I am a true mussulman, I see great likelihood of such being the case.”

“ Wherefore,” replied the Lootee, “ shall I be bastinadoed for refusing to perjure myself ?”

“ By no means,” returned the Meerza ; “ that

would be unjust, and we are by no means advocates for injustice; but it will never do to suffer such a theft, as that of which you are accused, to go unpunished; there are laws in this country, and the thief cannot escape his deserts."

"Alas Sahib!" ejaculated the other, "surely it is not your intention to allow the accusation against me to be carried on, knowing as you do mine innocence. Afakerillah?"

"How am I aware of your innocence, Padersookteh," replied Meerza Sadek, "the matter stands thus, a bale of silk is missed from a caravanserai, the identical bale is found concealed in your house; what further evidence of your guilt is required?"

"O, my Lord;" cried the unfortunate man, falling his knees before his iniquitous tyrant, "as you hope for mercy be not so unjust, so cruel; by your wife's honour, by your father's

soul, by the love of your children, have mercy upon me."

"Well, sirrah," said the Meerza, "and have I not made it manifest, that I am well inclined towards you ; and do you not dry up every particle of pity within my bosom, by your hypocrisy ; once for all, do you intend to perform what I require ?"

"Ask any thing else," replied the Lootee, "bid your slave, rob or murder, and he is ready to kiss the dust from your feet ; but he cannot, dare not swear falsely on the Koran."

"Then," returned the Meerza, emphatically, "you have eaten dirt, and your doom is fixed."

"Listen a moment, most gracious Sahib," exclaimed the Lootee, "by Ali, if I wished to perform your commands, it would be vain not ; at the very moment of swearing, my courage would fail, and I could not prevent myself

from declaring the truth ; and remember, Sire, it would not be well for your excellency, if it were known that you were the instigator of the perjury."

"What, at your threats again, dog !" said Meerza Sadek, exasperated to the highest degree at the obstinacy of his intended victim ; "then, by Mahomed, I cast you from me as a bankrupt Lootee, and you shall suffer the punishment for the theft you have committed."

"But has not your excellency declared mine innocence," said Ali Acma, "and proclaimed that it was by your own order, that the deed was done. O heaven help me, if you did not say so, and before a witness too."

"Where is he," replied the Meerza, sarcastically ; "I see him not."

"There he stands, Sahib," returned the Lootee, pointing to the pishkidmud, who during the above conversation had been standing at the further end of the apartment. "Did you not hear what the Meerza said ; tell me, as you

expect mercy hereafter, did you not heed his words ?”

“What words,” replied the pishkidmud, “I heard nothing ; I am deaf.”

“Wahi,” exclaimed the miserable wretch ; “I am lost indeed.”

“Aye, dolt, you speak truly,” rejoined Meerza Sadek, your fate is sealed. I doubt much, if justice will be satisfied with a mere corporal punishment ; a crime such as you are accused of, deserves the shekkeh.”(3)

At these words the deadly paleness, which was before visible on the countenance of the Loootee, increased, until his face presented the appearance of a corpse ; for a few moments he muttered the words, “The shekkeh—the shekkeh,” and then his limbs refusing to support him, he sunk trembling to the ground.

The Meerza gazed upon the terror-stricken wretch, with the basilisk eye of a snake about to seize upon its fascinated victim. He spoke

not for several moments, but sat in silence, chuckling over, and enjoying the scene before him; at length turning to the pishkidmud, he exclaimed, "Conduct this man back to his prison, and let justice take its course against him. I stand not between the thief and his punishment. On your eyes be it."

"May your shadow never be less," replied the attendant; "your slave is your sacrifice."

With these words, he approached Ali Acma, and tapped him on the shoulder, signing to him to leave the spot; the LooTEE on receiving the touch, sprung up like a man awakened from a dream, and from a state of apparent unconsciousness, broke out into a strain of the most vehement entreaties. He might as well have addressed a rock, his tyrant was as immoveable, till at length, in a fit of desperation, the man exclaimed, "Alas, alas, if fate so ordains, it must be so. I cannot fight against destiny, O Meerza: do as you will with your

slave, he is ready to perform whatever you require; but in the name of the prophet, do intervene between him and the shekkeh."

"Ha! ha!" cried Meerza Sadek, "so you are about to leave off eating dirt. O wonderful effect of a word of two syllables, it brings reason to a madman's brain. Say, are you willing then, Ali Acma, to swear to the truth of what I shall dictate to you concerning Meh-tee Khan."

"Fate so commands; I cannot do otherwise," replied the Lootee. "May heaven pardon the enormity of the crime."

"Well then," returned the Meerza, "for the present you are safe. I will take care that this accusation against you proceeds no further; but may my father's grave be defiled, if I do not let it be revived with ten-fold acrimony, should you show any design of retracting from your promise; as Mahomed is the true prophet, I swear, that in that case the shekkeh

shall be luxury compared to the torture you will undergo ; do you understand, or is your skull too thick to allow my words to make any impression on your brain ?”

“ Sahib,” replied the Lootee, “ I have both heard and understood ; let the consequences be on my head, if I fail.”

“ Barakillah !” returned the Meerza. “ Locman would not have spoken better. I begin to imagine you have some sense remaining ; leave us for the present, and go and sit down among my ferashes, I shall require your attendance again shortly ; till then here is something to make amends for the fright you have undergone.”

As he spoke, Meerza Sadek drew forth several gold pieces and gave them to the Lootee, who seizing the hand which presented him with the enam, pressed it to his lips, and making a low inclination of the body, said : “ May fortune smile upon your house !” then backed out of the apartment.

“ Follow him,” cried the Meerza turning to the pishkidmud, “ take heed that some one keep him in view ; on you be the consequences if he give us the slip. Bero, begone.

CHAPTER IX.

May life's unblessed cup for him
Be drugged with treacheries to the brim ;
With hopes that but allure to fly—
With joys that vanish while he sips,
Like Dead Sea fruits that tempt the eye
But turn to ashes on the lips !
His country's curse, his children's shame,
Outcast of virtue, peace, and fame,
May he, at last, with lips of flame,
On the parched desert thirsting die.

THE charitable persons who had taken charge of Ismael, after the bastinado he had received, having borne the suffering wretch to a house at a short distance from the spot where he had been so cruelly treated, proceeded to dress his wounds, which were of the most severe nature. Having performed this act of humanity, they hired a muleteer, who

was about to quit Hamadan and whose route lay near the Eliaut encampment, to convey the old man to his tent. Accordingly, on the following morning, Ismael was placed on the back of a mule whose paces were reckoned the easiest of the lot belonging to the chervador, and after a journey of several hours, rendered almost intolerable from the excruciating state of his body, arrived at the encampment, being reduced to a state of the most abject helplessness.

The grief of Feridoon may easily be imagined on his beholding the situation of his parent; rushing up to him, he exclaimed in an agonized voice : “ Father, what is this; what dogs have served you thus? May their bodies wither, who have dared to lay hands on you. O father, tell me where they are, in order that I may make them feel the effects of my vengeance.”

“ Alas, my son,” cried Ismael in a faint voice, “ at present I cannot answer you; bear

me to my bed at once, I am too weak to speak."

Feridoon upon this, with the assistance of some of his tribe, whom curiosity had drawn to the spot, lifted the old man from the mule, and bore him beneath the shelter of his tent, having reached which, the unhappy youth proceeded to pile together the softest nummuds, cushions and lahoffs,(1) which he could borrow for the occasion ; and having laid his parent thereon, and smoothed the coverings with that attentive care which becomes a dutiful child so well, he had soon the satisfaction of beholding the sufferer sink into slumber.

As soon as Ismael was asleep, Feridoon left the tent with noiseless steps, and proceeded to interrogate the muleteer who had conducted the old man to the encampment, concerning what had occurred. Although the chervador was not entirely conversant with the facts of the case, still the young Eliaut soon learned

sufficient to enable him to divine the truth, and he was horror-struck at discovering *himself* to be the involuntary cause of his father's mischance, which had evidently been brought about by the excess of Ismael's parental affection. Over and over again did the miserable youth curse the hour of his birth, and the day on which he had beheld the daughter of the Begler Beg, and bitterly did he reproach himself for having given way so rashly to the insane passion which had brought about so great a catastrophe.

Having passed some time in vain regrets, Feridoon returned to the spot where his parent was lying. The old shepherd was still asleep, but on his pale and care-worn countenance, were visible the traces of intense suffering; the sweat-drops fell in abundance from his temples, and ever and anon a stifled groan issued from his lips.

"O miserable Takdeer!" exclaimed the youth, as he gazed upon the suffering form before

him. "Why have you persecuted my father thus; what has he done to merit such cruel treatment? Alas! if yonder muleteer speaks truth, this is the work of that tyrant Mehtee Khan; may his liver dry up, may his star be overclouded, may his hearth be defiled, may his family perish: but stay," he observed halting in the midst of the sentence, "may I be forgiven for that last wish; *she* is one of his family. O may *she* be happy, though ten thousand curses light on the impious author of her being; may *she* never know a moment's uneasiness."

Here the sobs of the ardent lover stopped further utterance, while the remembrance of Zoraya, served for a moment to soften the anger he felt against her parent.

After several hours, Ismael awoke, feverish and unrefreshed and racked with a raging thirst; turning his eyes languidly upwards he feebly ejaculated the word, "Water."

Feridoon flew to him, and supporting him in his arms, lifted to his lips a bowl of sherbet cooled with snow, which he had prepared in anticipation of Ismael's requiring it. The old shepherd having drained with avidity the delicious contents, sank with a momentary sigh of pleasure on his pillow.

O ye who have never felt the tortures of real thirst, who have only drunk to satisfy the slight wants of every day's occurrence, you can never imagine the delicious sensation caused by a cool refreshing beverage to one whose throat is parched from the effect of severe bodily anguish in a dry and hot climate such as Persia ; think therefore what must be the pangs endured by those who have, during the heat of summer, been wounded in the desert, and who are unable to procure even a drop of water to assuage the burning thirst which is the consequence ; but enough, the very idea is painful, par-

ticularly to one to whom it brings remembrance.

After Ismael had partaken of the sherbet, Feridoon proceeded to renew the dressings of his feet; grieved as he had been before, he was cut to the very soul on beholding the swollen and livid lumps of flesh that represented those members. Tears of agony fell upon them, and big drops from the eyes of the son mingled with the blood of the parent.

“My father!” exclaimed the wretched Feridoon, after he had finished dressing the wounds; “tell me, if you have strength enough, the full facts of what has happened. I know so far, that I am a defiled wretch, and unworthy of being your son. I have been the cause of your stripes, and no power on earth can again whiten my face.”

“My child,” answered Ismael, “talk not thus; you have eaten no dirt; I have only to blame mine own folly for what has occurred.

The Begler Beg certainly gave me fair warning, of what would be the consequence of my re-appearance, and indeed he has kept his word; but the fool little knew that it was for his own good, that I approached his presence a second time; unhappy man! he would not let me speak."

Ismael now slowly recounted the events that had occurred during his absence; commencing with his intention to attempt the cure of his son's despondency, and then proceeding through the train of incidents that had happened. On his arriving at that part of the tale which introduced the conversation between Moorad and Hussein, the attention of Feridoon became intense, and his agitation excessive, as his father related the diabolical plot that had been planned for the abduction of Zoraya.

"O! Allah be merciful!" he exclaimed, as Ismael finished that part of his recital, "grant me but power to overthrow the scheme planned

by this son of Shaitan(2) and to rescue *her* from the grasp of these ruffians, and I ask no more. O ! my father you did well to outwit that Moorad ; (may the hand he lifted against you wither). Thanks be to Providence, the head of an Eliaut, is better than that of a Koord. Alhamdillillah ! father, you did well."

On Ismael's mentioning his second meeting with Mehtee Khan, and how he had received the bastinado, the features of Feridoon became convulsed, with the mingled passions of grief and anger ;—grief at his parent's sufferings, and anger at the Begler Beg's cruelty. Had Mehtee Khan been present, during the recital, it would have been impossible to imagine to what lengths the enraged Eliaut, regardless of the consequences, might have carried his rage, maddened as he was by the spectacle before him. As it was, a momentary impulse prompted him to seek the Khan, and wreak his vengeance on him, although at

the hazard of his life ; but a glance at his father seemed to convince the young man, that such an act, if practicable, would render Ismael's situation still more deplorable, as deprived of him, his only support, the aged shepherd had no other quarter to look to. This idea flashing across him, served in a great degree to calm the fury which raged in his bosom.

Fatigued by the exertion required to relate what had happened, old Ismael soon fell again into a sound sleep, which lasted throughout the night ; nor did he awake until the sun was high in the heavens ; by that time Feridoon had chalked out a path of action which he fondly hoped would frustrate the intentions of the follower of Karah Kaplan ; whom he determined to attack, while in the act of bearing off his victim.

On his mentioning this to his father, the old man's eye gleamed with a momentary fire ;

he knew that it would be most probable that if his son succeeded in his attempt, that the highway of glory would be opened to him, by the gratitude of Mehtee Khan; but, on the other hand, Ismael remembered, that the service on which his son,—his only hope—was about to start, was one of the most extreme danger, and that instead of meeting with success, he might be baffled and slain. Ismael well knew, that although his son was expert in the use of arms, still it was rumoured that the Koords surpassed the remainder of mankind in such exercises, and to ensure success in the enterprise, his beloved child would be obliged to contend, hand to hand, with one to vanquish whom, would be the deed of a Rustum; for it was unlikely, if not impossible, that such a man as the Karah Kaplan would have selected any one to be his second in command, save he were renowned for his courage, strength, skill in arms and horsemanship. The

old shepherd had looked upon the strong stalwart form of Moorad; he had felt his sturdy gripe upon his throat, and he sighed when he thought that Feridoon might be the inferior, and he almost felt a wish to restrain his son from attempting the undertaking. Still, as he gazed on the undaunted bearing and the goodly proportions of the youth—as he remembered how excellent was his horsemanship, and his superiority among the Eliauts in the use of the sword and shield, besides the unerring aim with which he was wont to hurl the jereed, his fears vanished, and he could not bring himself to imagine that his son might not be the victor in the intended combat.

CHAPTER X.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw ;
Whose brazen studs and tough bull hide,
Had death so often dashed aside.

LADY OF THE LAKE.

ABOUT seven fursuks from Hamadan, on the road leading to Sultaneah, the traveller may have remarked a mountain of curious shape ; its steepness such, that the path by which caravans usually proceed, winds almost entirely around it. The consequence is, that two parties coming from different directions, would not be aware of each other's approach, until the foremost mules actually met in the narrow

way. The summit of this mountain commands a magnificent view of the country for many miles around, and no party, however small, coming from any direction, could escape the notice of a vigilant sentinel, placed there for the purpose of reconnoitring. As soon as this mountain is passed, commences that extensive plain, which continues, with but slight interruptions as far as Sultaneah.

On account of the narrowness of the path which winds around the above mentioned mountain, (which is called the Falcons' hill), a very small body of men well armed, might easily plunder a numerous caravan, were the time and situation well chosen, and the natural defences of the place taken advantage of; for while a lightly caparisoned, and active horse finds tolerable footing on the sides of the mountain off the pathway, a heavily laden mule could not possibly keep its legs for a moment, much less bear its burden onwards.

This was the spot chosen for the bringing into practice the scheme planned by Moorad, which was the subject of conversation between himself and the Chervador Hussein, in the caravanserai of Hamadan; and a situation more suited for the purpose intended could not have been easily found.

The dawn of day was beginning to light up the surrounding scenery, when a solitary figure was seen perched upon the highest peak of the mountain, apparently scanning the horizon with great attention; at some distance below, close to a spot where the pathway widened in a slight degree, a small band of armed men were collected together, whose dress and accoutrements appeared to be Persian. Each man was seated on the ground, holding a horse by the bridle, in readiness to mount at a moment's notice; the figure at the summit of the peak was visible to them, and seemed the object of the narrowest observation.

Suddenly a sign was made by the sentinel, and as suddenly every man of the band sprung to his feet, and mounting his horse, drew his sword and prepared himself for an immediate encounter. From the few words that passed among them, it was evident that although their garb was Persian, their language was that of a different nation.

• Their horses were magnificent, and they themselves men of superior sinews and strength. Their bold countenances evinced the dauntless spirit which pervaded their hearts, while the fierce expression visible upon them, shewed that they were accustomed to deeds of violence and rapine. Although the band did not consist of more than twenty men, they were a match for double that number of opponents, perfectly armed and mounted, provided that they were not attacked at a disadvantage, and they were evidently too well inured to the stratagems of war, ever to allow themselves to be taken by surprise.

The cause of the little troop having put itself into motion was, that a moving mass in the distance had attracted the attention of the sentinel at the summit of the mountain, who had in consequence, according to his orders, made a preconcerted signal to his companions.

The approaching party consisted of the daughter of Mehtee Khan, her attendants and baggage, on their journey towards Sultaneah. They had passed the preceding night at a small village, and were now proceeding to their next station.

As long as her route lay through the plain, the Hamadance damsel performed the journey in a takteravan; a species of litter borne by mules, in which she reclined at full length; the jolting movement of the conveyance being much lessened by soft cushions, which were placed within. A takteravan, however, being only suited for level roads, whenever the path

becomes mountainous or uneven, the occupier is obliged to mount on horseback.

The journey having hitherto been over the plain, Zoraya had not yet quitted her conveyance; but as the party approached the mountainous road, a beautiful steed, magnificently caparisoned, was led towards the front, in order for her to mount.

One of the men who held the rein of the animal was Moorad, the Koord, still in the disguise of a muleteer; a self-satisfied smile played over his handsome features, as he saw his well laid plans drawing nigh to a successful close; he knew that hitherto nothing had been neglected; the Chervador Hussein had reported to him that he had performed the part required of him without suspicion, in rendering the fire-arms of the guard temporarily useless, and that he was perfectly prepared to fulfil the other arrangements necessary to wind up the plot. Moorad had also made him-

self exceedingly popular among the attendants by his clever conversation and amusing jests, and although his present ostensible situation was one of such inferior rank, as properly to have kept him at a distance from the chief persons of the party, he notwithstanding had been allowed to ride among the attendants nearest to the takteravan; he had also been entrusted with the care of Zoraya's horse, which he now led forward as they entered the mountainous path.

Zoraya having descended from her litter proceeded to mount, when the Koord managed, unseen, to give the animal a slight wound with his knife on the fetlock, and then retreated to the rear. In consequence of the stab it had received, the animal for a moment, plunged and reared; but the first smart of the wound passing over, it proceeded onwards quietly, for about a couple of hundred yards, when it began to walk lame and then stopped alto-

gether. The attendants having crowded up, in order to find out the cause of this misfortune, Hussein, true to his instructions, loosened the cords which bound the baggage of several mules, and the loads falling to the ground, called out for assistance. Several of the retinue turned back for the purpose of affording him aid, when Moorad, who had watched his opportunity, mounted and stole to the front, and on arriving within a few yards of Zoraya, dashed up to her, and shooting the man who held her rein, seized the maiden round the waist, and dragging her from her seat, placed her before him and galloped off.

The utility of the precaution, taken the night before, now demonstrated itself; for in an instant several guns were aimed at the person of the daring Koord, which, on the triggers being drawn, discharged not their contents, while Moorad held his course scatheless across the hills. At this moment the band

that had lain in concealment, darted upon the panic struck Hamadanees, who, taken by surprise, made but a slight resistance; most of them turning their horses and taking to an ignominious flight along the road over which they had journeyed in the morning; in consequence the marauders without much bloodshed proceeded to plunder the baggage; leaving the cowardly retinue to effect their escape as they best might.

At this moment, Hussein, who in obedience to the instructions of his late companion, had worn a yellow handkerchief round his cap; came fearlessly up to the Koords; when one of them, without the smallest hesitation, struck him a blow with his scimitar, that split the head of the unfortunate man in twain. Thus fell, justly punished, one who had been a principal actor in the plot; nor was it by accident that he fell a victim to his treachery; for he had been particularly marked out for destruction,

in order that no one should remain alive, who could give information whence the scheme had originated, and how it had been executed; so that in case the maiden might be demanded by the Persian government, from Karah Kaplan, that chief might deny any knowledge of the circumstance, and thus avoid an open rupture; although it might be well surmised, that he was the originator of the whole affair. As for the old shepherd, whom he had discovered in the act of listening to his conversation, Moorad gave little heed to him, as he judged that he would be much too frightened to give information of what he had heard; even if he knew all, which was exceedingly doubtful; and had Ismael really been nothing more than a common Eliaut shepherd, this surmise would have been correct, as a poor, miserable and cowardly wretch, such as he appeared to be, would not have dared to court revenge, by relating a story which would be unauthenticated by any

other evidence, and might indeed, cause him to be suspected of having joined in the conspiracy.

While his companions were engaged in plundering, Moorad was directing his rapid course towards the Maidens' Spring, exulting in the success that had attended his exertions, and bearing the unconscious maiden before him, for she had fainted. Murwari, the Arab steed, who before had seemed a half-starved, and lank yaboo, being put to his paces, showed how just had been the praises bestowed upon him by his master. Bounding over the rocky ground with footing as sure as on the plain, he bid fair to perform the required distance in a brief interval.

Moorad had already proceeded above a fursuk, when just as he arrived at a spot where the road became more level, a single horseman darted from behind a rocky fragment, and placing himself in the midst of the path,

attempted to oppose further progress. It was Feridoon, who, conscious that the Koord would be obliged to pass that way, had lain in waiting, and with throbbing heart saw the time for action arrive. But the excellent horsemanship of Moorad here showed itself; although, encumbered with his burden, he managed as he came up to make a sudden though slight deviation from the path, and passing by the Eliaut, unharmed by a blow aimed at him, held on at a pace which seemed to set pursuit at defiance. Enraged at his failure, Feridoon put his own steed to his speed, and followed: but to his horror and disappointment, he perceived that every bound placed a greater distance between him and the Koord. Notwithstanding the disparity of weight, the superior swiftness of Murwari was such, that in a short time he was several hundred yards in advance.

An event, however, occurred which material-

ly altered the aspect of affairs ; Zoraya who had lain in a state of insensibility, began to revive, and on perceiving her situation, shrieked out, and struggled so violently, as greatly to impede the pace of Murwari. Moorad, also, his attention being turned to his burden, found excessive difficulty in managing his reins ; in the meanwhile, Feridoon was fast gaining on him ; perceiving, therefore, that it would be impossible to avoid a contest, the Koord reined in his steed, and placing Zoraya on the ground, sternly forbade her attempting to escape, under pain of instant death, and facing round prepared to encounter the approaching foe. Had the combatants been equally armed, no doubt could have existed as to the issue of the rencontre ; the superiority of the Koord both in strength and horsemanship, being enormous. He at present, however, possessed merely a sword and a steel javelin, which hung at his saddle bow, his pistol being

discharged, he was also without his shield, or any defensive armour whatever ; while Feridoon was armed with both shield and sword.(1) Notwithstanding his labouring under all these disadvantages, Moorad undauntedly prepared to encounter his adversary, and as soon as Feridoon was within distance, he hurled forth his jereed at the youth, the missile flew swiftly through the air, straight towards the Eliaut's breast, when just as its barbed head was on the very point of reaching its intended gaol, Feridoon dexterously interposed his shield, so that the spear glanced off in a slanting direction ; having thus escaped unharmed, he dashed his heel to his courser's flank, and attacked his enemy with his sabre ; Moorad, however, parried the blows well, and returned them with such good interest, that had not the young Eliaut possessed a tough shield, and been well practised in its use, his fate would have soon been decided. The combat now became hot ;

the admirable horsemanship of both parties showed itself to the utmost, particularly that of the Koord, who aware of the disadvantage under which he was fighting, exerted his utmost skill, wheeling round and round, in order to avoid the other's blows, and waiting for an opportunity when Feridoon should leave his head exposed.

Zoraya gazed upon the combatants with a throbbing heart ; who Feridoon was, she could not conjecture ; but she easily descried that he was come to rescue her from the clutches of her abductor.

At length, breathless from the violence of their exertions, the two foes paused for a moment, as if by mutual consent ; still, however, eying each other with fury in their looks.

“ Dog ! ” cried Feridoon, “ how dare you thus violate the laws. Get ye hence, and be happy that you have escaped with life.”

“ Whose unclean offspring are you,” returned the other, “to interfere; thwart me more, and you will repent of your folly. Have you not already sufficiently tested the strength of my arm.”

“ Your strength, hound of Shaitan,” cried the youth; “a famished cur possesseth more. Are you a Rustum that you can contend against odds? Look well, fool, and observe how much superior my weapons are to yours; where too is your shirt of mail, where your shield? Come, be prudent, and deliver up the maiden, as you hope to live.”

“ Ha! braggart say you so,” roared out the Koord; “then thus do I send your soul to Jehanum.”

With these words, he suddenly spurred his steed, and with a bound came up to his adversary dealing him at the same time so formidable a blow, that the cap which Feridoon wore, was cut almost through; fortunately the lining

was so thick that the youth was unharmed, though he was hurled from his horse and came to the ground losing both his shield and sword in the fall.

In an instant, however, he had regained his feet, and nimbly avoiding a second blow, ran towards a huge fragment of rock in order to ensconce himself behind it, calling out to Zoraya to follow his example; but Moorad, who had been carried by the violence of his last effort some paces in a different direction, turned again and was fast gaining upon his unarmed adversary; indeed the fate of Feridoon seemed inevitable, when he by chance perceived the javelin, that had been cast at the beginning of the combat, sticking in the ground. To seize upon it, and hurl it was the work of an instant; the weapon being truly aimed and skillfully thrown, struck the Koord in the sword arm, piercing it to the very bone. The limb fell powerless at Moorad's side, while

the sabre, which it held, dropped to the ground. Feridoon perceiving the success which had attended his last attempt, regained his own arms and mounted his horse, when the baffled Koord, seeing all hope of continuing the combat vanish, uttered a dreadful curse and wheeling round, rode off at full speed, leaving the young Eliaut master of the field.

CHAPTER XI.

And is the hostile troop arrived,
And have they won the day ?
It must have been a bloody field,
'Ere Darwent fled away.

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

WITHOUT pausing to take breath, after the long and violent combat that had taken place, Feridoon proceeded to direct his attention towards the maiden, whom he had rescued, when he perceived her extended on the ground, in a fainting condition ; the cause of which had been, the beholding of her champion hurled from his saddle ; when imagining herself to be again in the power of the Koord, the blood had left

her heart and she had fallen lifeless to the earth.

Distracted at seeing the situation of his beloved, Feridoon leapt from his horse, and taking the unconscious maiden in his arms, used every endeavour to recal her to life; carrying her to a stream of water, he bathed her temples and hands profusely, at the same time calling upon her, by every endearing epithet, to look up.

Her veil had fallen off, and her features, beautiful, even in the semblance of death, were fully exposed to view; her chauder having been disordered during her forced and rapid course across the hills, no longer enveloped her form, so that the young Eliaut beheld, unrestrained, charms upon which no man, except a father, had freely gazed before. Had Feridoon now beheld that face for the first time, closed as were its eyes and pale its cheeks, he would have become (or he had not

been a Persian) irrevocably enamoured of the possessor ; but having already, although but for an instant, seen it lighted up with the glow of health and radiant with expression, he felt that to die, even in torments, in such a maiden's service would be happiness compared to the agony of being forced to quit her.

After some time, Zoraya began to revive ; the colour again mantled her cheeks, and opening her large and lustrous eyes, she became restored to consciousness.

On beholding Feridoon, her first movement was one of alarm, at perceiving herself to be in the arms of a man, and that man a stranger ; hastily extricating herself from his grasp, she felt for her veil and on observing its loss, she covered her face with her hands, and imagining herself still in the power of Moorad, exclaimed.

“ Monster ! Fiend ! Why have you thus torn me from my companions ? In the name

of your mother, have mercy upon me and restore me to them."

Feridoon hastened to undeceive her, informing her of her safety, and the defeat of the Koord ; upon which, directing her eyes towards him, and observing her mistake, Zoraya expressed her thanks in the warmest terms, calling down blessings upon her gallant deliverer.

Whether or not the handsome form of the Eliaut produced any sudden impression upon the maiden's feelings, cannot of course be absolutely asserted ; but having well observed him, she no longer evinced any intention of concealing her features. It might have been that no veil was at hand ; however, merely drawing her chauder over her form, she listened to the recital of Feridoon, who informed her of the reason of his opportune appearance. By degrees such full particulars were given, that Zoraya discovered that she owed her safe-

ty to the son of the old man who had been so maltreated by her father.

On her expressing her sorrow for what had happened on that occasion, and lamenting that one, to whom she owed so much, should have hitherto received nought but injury and insult from her family; at the same time promising that his courage and devotion should meet their deserved reward, Feridoon interrupted her and exclaimed,

“Lady, I am already sufficiently recompensed, if I have rendered any service to one for whom I am ready to shed the last drop of my blood. O, be not offended, when I confess that ever since that memorable day on which I beheld your countenance in the bazar of Hamadan, your image has never ceased to cross my imagination.”

“Offended ! my gallant friend !” replied Zoraya, “how can I be offended with one who has saved me from worse than death ?”

“ Still, lady,” said the Eliaut, “ it is presumption in me, humble and poor as I am, even to *think* of one so far exalted above me.”

“ Nay !” said the maiden, “ you wrong yourself ; from what I have understood, your father is of noble(1) blood, and although reduced to poverty, that does not lower either him or you in my opinion ; however, poverty shall no longer be your portion ; I know my father well, he is not one to pass over, with slight notice, the rescuer of a beloved daughter.”

It was evident that the Hamadanee maiden and Feridoon had fallen deeply into mutual admiration, and their conversation might have proceeded without either desiring to draw it to a close, when the horse of the latter beginning to paw the ground with impatience, the noise recalled the pair to a sense of their situation, and made them remember that it was time to think of removing from the spot, lest Moorad, having obtained assistance, might return for

the purpose of recapturing the maiden. Feridoon also recollected that it was the intention of the Koordish band, which had attacked the attendants of the Begler Beg, to proceed to the Maiden's Spring, after the mules had been plundered, consequently, that they would pass by the path near which the late combat had taken place.

The youth, therefore, proposed that Zoraya should mount his horse and proceed under his guidance to the Eliaut encampment; Zoraya was about to comply with this advice, when a noise, as if of horses galloping, was heard, and looking towards the spot whence the sounds proceeded, Feridoon beheld a mounted party approaching at full speed, and divining that they were the Koords returning from their foray, he hastily retired with his charge behind a rock, which concealed them from view, and awaited the passing of the banditti; when, to his dismay,

on their arriving at the spot where the late combat had taken place, they reined in their steeds and dismounting, seemed prepared to make a halt, for taking out their chibouques they filled and lighted them, and seating themselves on the ground entered into conversation with each other.

“Barakillah!” said one, “we have done well; we have not only carried off a wife for our chief, but also collected plunder enough to keep us merry for a twelvemonth.”

“How the cowards ran,” observed another; “they hardly gave us time to burn their fathers. A precious set of rascals are those Hamadanee pishkidmuds, to take to flight at the first appearance of danger. Alhamdellillah; I was born a Koord, no ass of an Iranee had any hand in my birth.”

“Mashallah;” said the first speaker turning to a rough looking Koord of gigantic dimensions, “yon was a good blow of thine, which split

in twain the head of the fellow who wore a yellow cap."

"At any rate, Abdallah," replied the man addressed, "it did not require much force to reach the man's brain; had I cut through a hindowanee(2) it could not have yielded more easily than his skull to my sabre's edge."

"Well, well," returned Abdallah, "he deserved his fate, doubly deserved it, both on account of his treachery to his master and his being such an idiot as to imagine, for a moment, that he would be suffered to stand in our way on his ceasing to be of use. Where was he born, that he forgot the proverb, 'dead men tell no tales.'"

"He was indeed a dewaneh," exclaimed several of the band; "what an ass his father must have been."

"What a Rustum is our Moorad," observed Abdallah; "did you not see how quickly he managed his business. Bah, before any one

could cry mashallah ! he had seized the girl, and was off. I warrant, that before this he has reached our chief, or Murwari is not the horse I take him for ;—but what is that glittering yonder?”

The object that had excited the attention of Abdallah was the sword which had fallen from Moorad's hand on his receiving his wound, and which Feridoon, being too much engaged, had neglected to secure before he sought his present shelter. Several of the band having proceeded to the spot where the weapon was lying, instantly recognized it ; a single exclamation sufficed to cause the remainder of the party to rise and hasten towards their comrades.

“ By the head of Ali,” cried Abdallah after a moment's pause, “ it *is* his sword, I could swear to it among a thousand(3), Khorasan never sent forth a better blade.”

“ And by the holy camel,” exclaimed the

man who had slain Hussein, "there is blood upon it, and freshly spilt; how is this, and on the hilt too."

"Wahi, wahi!" said Abdallah, "what can have happened? Look here, the earth is torn up by horses' feet; there has been a combat; surely Moorad cannot have fallen."

"Afakerillah!" ejaculated the other, "still why has his sword been dropt and been left here? Allah forefend his having been forced to surrender up his prize by superior numbers, they could not be few to overcome our comrade, who is a match for a dozen Persians."

"Let us make instant search around," replied Abdallah, "perchance we may discover something that may throw light upon this affair."

This advice was immediately followed; the Koords mounted, and proceeded slowly in

different directions, casting penetrating glances around.

To the dismay and apprehension of the concealed pair one of the men approached the rock behind which they had sought shelter. Although they had been too far distant to overhear the conversation detailed above, they had seen the discovery of the sword and observed the gestures and actions of the hand; consequently, it may easily be imagined with what feelings Feridoon and Zoraya beheld the search that was being made.

The Koord came close to them; he cast a hasty glance around, and was proceeding in a different direction when Feridoon's horse, hearing the trample of one of his species, raised his head, expanded his nostrils and was on the very point of neighing, when his master, quick as thought, plunged his sword up to the very hilt into the animal's heart, stifling by its

death, the sound which would have betrayed them. It was a hard, but necessary sacrifice, for had the neigh been made and heard, all would have been lost; as it was, the attention of the Koord who had just passed, seemed to have been attracted by the noise made by the animal's fall, for he stopped and inclined his head as if listening; at this moment, however, a shout from another quarter caused him to gallop off. No sooner had he gone, than Feridoon supporting Zoraya in his arms, began to retreat from the spot, keeping under cover of the rocks, lest he might be observed from below.

Notwithstanding the danger of his position, and the certain destruction that awaited his being discovered, it may be questioned whether it was one at all objected to by the youth: his arm was encircling the waist of her whom he adored and to whom he had rendered and was rendering an inestimable service, one at

least deserving of her gratitude ; and to be the occupier of the thoughts of the Hamadanee maiden, even for a moment, was to Feridoon happiness unknown to any but Orientals, whose blood runs through their veins like so much fire, causing their love to be devotion, their hatred detestation, their wish to revenge an insult almost demoniacal fury ; all their passions are in extremes.

The love felt by Feridoon for Zoraya was indeed a feeling of devotion—the feeling of a Romanist towards his tutelar saint—the feeling of a Mussulman towards his prophet.

Having ascended for sometime as fast as the rugged nature of the ground would permit, and being arrived at an elevated situation from whence the surrounding country was visible to a great distance, the Eliaut gladly discovered that the Koords had proceeded on their way ; his fair burden and himself were

therefore in safety, and it only remained to determine what was next to be done.

They were some distance from the Eliaut encampment and still further from the village where Zoraya had rested the previous night, and no means of journeying remained to them, except by proceeding on foot, the Eliaut's horse having been slain. The day, however, was not far advanced, Feridoon therefore bid the maiden lean upon his arm and thus supporting her, proceeded towards the encampment of his tribē, that being the point to which they decided on directing their steps.

CHAPTER XII.

How I have loved, heaven knows ; but there's a fate
Which hinders me from being fortunate.

DRYDEN.

It was about an hour before sunset, when Feridoon and Zoraya arrived within sight of the black tents, being at the distance of about a fursuk. For the last four hours, the maiden had performed the journey upon the back of a Yaboo, which they had fortunately met with and borrowed. Consequently, the lovely girl not being so fatigued, as she otherwise would have been, had entered into free conversation with her conductor, and from him had learned a full and concise account of his origin, and the

former rank and station of his father Ismael, the greatness of which was beyond all she had conceived. The frank bearing and manly carriage of Feridoon, added to his handsome personal appearance, had quite won the maiden's heart, who had never to her idea gazed on his equal, besides which, she had never spoken to, or been spoken to by man before, excepting her father and a few favoured domestics ; being therefore now thrown for a whole day into the society of one, who besides possessing great personal advantages, had preserved her from a miserable destiny at the hazard of his life, it cannot be wondered that her feelings towards him were stronger than those of gratitude, particularly on considering her character so imbued with romance, and on her discovering that her preserver had long and ardently loved her. His present lowly station obtruded not itself on her mind, she thought of him only as

her defender, her lover, one equal to, if not superior to herself.

They had, as observed above, arrived within a fursuk of the Eliaut encampment, when a party of horsemen were observed approaching at a rapid pace; on coming up to Feridoon and Zoraya, the foremost rider stopped his horse by a sudden pull of his arm, and knitting his brow began to stare fixedly upon them. The Eliaut scarcely knew whether to be glad or sorry at the rencontre, as he recognised Mahomed Reza Meerza(1) Prince Governor of the province; his heart however whispered to him, that all was not right.

The Prince's attention was attracted by finding a woman, evidently of rank, in such a place, attended only by a single man, and he a youth of handsome appearance, but whose dress did not betoken him of sufficient rank, to be either her husband or

brother. Zoraya was, also, without a veil, and her chauder was scarcely sufficient to disguise her features, revealing also portions of dress, which were evidently of the most splendid kind.

“Who are you?” said the Prince addressing Feridoon, “what are you doing here, and who is that woman?”

Feridoon, making a low and respectful salaam, answered, that she was the daughter of the Begler Beg of Hamadan.

“Dog!” replied the Prince, his eyes flashing fire, “what then are you doing here together? How happens it that a baseborn wretch, should thus be discovered alone with a damsel of rank. Speak, burnt father, before I order your tongue to be cut out; how has it happened?”

Feridoon thus enjoined, hastened to inform the Shah zadeh of the occurrences of the day, and how he had rescued Zoraya from the clutches of the Koord. The jealousy of Ma-

homed Reza Meerza was excited at hearing this account, as it had been for some time his intention, to take the Hamadanee damsel into his own harem. Turning therefore to her he observed,

“Khanum, I am your father’s friend, and will take charge of you myself, and see you in safety to your home ; I will also take good care that you meet not again with such an accident, as will cause to need you the assistance of a peasant ; therefore Khanum, I will thank you to proceed with me. Bachahau, attend to her.”

“But, my lord !” exclaimed Zoraya, “leave not yonder youth thus ; he deserves not to go unrewarded for the services which he has rendered me. Consider, my gracious lord, that had it not been for him——”

“Peace, malapert !” interrupted the Prince, “do as you are bidden ; my orders brook no questioning. Bachahau to your duty.”

Two attendants, upon this, seized the rein of

Zoraya's horse, unheeding her entreaties, and led her from the spot; the Prince delayed but a minute to order some of his attendants to drive Feridoon away, and prevent his following them; he then galloped off.

The commands of Mahomed Reza Meerza were implicitly obeyed, even to a greater extent than was intended, and the youth who, at the peril of his life, had that morning saved the maiden, was driven from the spot with blows and abuse; nor did the numerous attendants cease their ill usage, until the Eliaut was scarcely able to move from the spot; upon which, bursting into a roar of laughter, they mockingly wished him a pleasant journey, and rode away.

Feridoon stood gazing upon the departing cavalcade in silence. He felt no pain, no outward hurt from his blows, but in his throat there was a sensation of suffocation. His heart was full, as if about to burst; he saw his golden

dreams vanish ; he saw the object of his adoration, his soul's idol disappear, he well knew for ever, as to hope that an opportunity would occur of beholding Zoraya again, even for a moment was absurd, as charms such as hers, which had produced such a warm effect upon *his* breast, would inevitably do the same with the hearts of others, particularly with respect to Mahomed Reza, whose violent passions and strong susceptibility for beauty were well known ; and alas, Feridoon was too well aware of the power of such a man, who would never brook the slightest hindrance to his desires. Zoraya, therefore, was lost to him for ever, for whatever might be her wishes, her father dare not refuse a Prince's alliance.

He also well knew the effect of rank on a woman's heart ; how much it would prevail against the effect of love. He knew that, in general, women would sacrifice their best affections for wealth and station ; and forget,

or, at least stifle the remembrance of a love once felt for an object, inferior in worldly, though superior in other qualifications.

Revolving such thoughts in his mind, the unhappy youth dragged himself slowly towards his home, and arriving there about dusk, proceeded at once to his father's tent; and seating himself on the ground, gave vent to his unhappiness; tears, actual tears flowed in streams down his cheeks; he was as a child—he was quite unmanned.

His old father, who was lying down, still suffering from his wounds, observed with astonishment, the behaviour of his son, and addressing him in his kindest manner, bid him relate his adventures, at the same time telling him to be of good courage, and not to give way to despair.

“I see, my child!” he said, “that you have met with a rebuff; but still you have escaped with life; your skin is left, and surely a skin

is no such bad thing, after all. Be thankful, my boy, that you are still spared to bless the days of your parent."

Feridoon hastened to give Ismael an account of his adventures ; the eye of the old man glistened at the recital of the combat ; his imagination flew back to days long past, and revelled over many a field of glory, in which he had been an actor ; when, however, the story arrived at the description of the approach of Moorad's companions, and the death of Feridoon's horse, Ismael could contain himself no longer, but raising himself in his couch, he threw up his hands and exclaimed,

" Barakillah, my own brave boy, you indeed deserve a glorious destiny. When did mortal ever hear of such conduct before. Whose dog was Rustum compared to you. Oh ! my gallant child, you was a good blow of thine, which subdued the Koord, and forced him to seek safety in flight ; it must have been a sick-

ening thing for him to show his back to an enemy. Oh! my son, you have brought healing ointment to my wounds, in telling me that the proud spirit of Moorad has received a rebuff, and from the hand of one whom he would previously have contemned. But that action is not the only one which has whitened your face: it was well thought of that blow which prevented your horse from giving an alarm. Poor Karagoosh,(2) he was a goodly steed; it was an unhappy though necessitous fate to deprive him of life, he had performed his duty well, and had he returned alive, he should have experienced the effects of my gratitude. We would have starved ourselves in order to have seen his bag(3) well filled. But go on, my child, I am all attention."

Feridoon proceeded; he talked of the beauty of Zoraya with enthusiasm, he dwelt upon every word that had come from her lips, with the avidity of a miser counting over his hoarded

gold, fearful of losing the smallest portion of his wealth. At length he brought his tale to a conclusion, and then giving way to despair, began to lament his adverse fate.

Ismael long endeavoured to assuage the youth's grief; his arguments, indeed, could not possess much consolation, as he well knew how improbable if not impossible it was, that Zoraya and Feridoon could meet again. All he could do therefore, was to bid the youth act with firmness, and to drive away if possible, the remembrance of the beautiful and transient vision.

Few things are harder to be borne by man, than his being rejected on his confessing his love; far harder, however, is it to know that he is beloved in return, but that an insurmountable barrier is raised between him, and the object of his affections; in the first instance, many feelings are outraged, a dreadful pang inflicted, the vanity also of a man is stricken, his hopes

suddenly nipped ; still, if he be a *man* his pride *may* assist him in overcoming his feelings ; but in the other case, the very knowledge that he is beloved in vain, is torture ; no pride can come to his assistance, but he lingers on in hopeless, endless misery.

Long was it before the young Eliaut could bring himself to think calmly ; his expectations had received too severe a shock. Finding also, that his former occupations were too tame, and without sufficient diversity, for a mind like his, he determined to change his manner and action of life, and an opportunity for so doing occurring, he gladly availed himself of it. His good horsemanship, and skill in martial exercises, had long since attracted the favourable attention of his chief, and this nobleman was on the point of proceeding to the Shah's camp at Sultaneah, and being desirous of making as much show as possible, was collecting together the finest youths of the

tribe, to form his body guard. Feridoon's determination was soon taken ; having obtained his father's sanction, he proceeded to offer his services to Abbas Khan, who enrolled him among his Gholams, with a promise of promotion on the first vacancy.

It must be confessed that it was not the desire of stirring occupation alone, which induced the youth to act thus ; there was also a secret hope, not even avowed to himself, of beholding Zoraya ; at least he would be near her, and even that slender consolation served to raise his spirits.

The day for the departure of Abbas Khan had arrived ;(4) a fortunate hour was proclaimed for his setting out, and all was bustle and animation throughout the camp.

A few minutes before quitting his father's tent, Feridoon, kneeling before the old man, requested his blessing.

“ May Allah preserve thee, my son,” ex-

claimed Ismael, placing his hands upon the shoulders of the youth; "may he take you under his especial care,—may he watch over, and direct your steps. Forget not, Feridoon, to offer up your prayers to him; let not the amusements of the camp, and the society you will meet there, cause you to neglect your religion; whatever occupation you may enter into, whatever labours you may undergo, there is always time for prayer. You are now going where you will find many, who, thinking only of gaiety, and the enjoyment of the passing hour, throw into oblivion their God and their prophet, unheeding the precepts of the Koran, and the doctrines instilled from infancy into their bosoms. I know, my son, that there is little chance of your becoming one of these; but still you are young, I should feel I had not done my duty as a parent, in neglecting to warn you."

"Allah forefend, O my father!" cried Feri-

doon, "my neglecting my religion. Thanks be to your care, the precepts of the prophet are too deeply engrafted in my heart, that I should forget them; never shall the holy name of Allah, and of our blessed Mahomed be for a moment absent from my thoughts."

"Alhamdellillah!" answered Ismael; "blessed be the hour when you first beheld the light, —blessed be the voice which told me on your birth, that I *still* possessed a son. My Feridoon, I can easily foresee that a life of glory awaits you; go to your duty, forget not my words, —may you be happy."

The father and son embraced, and the latter having quitted the tent, mounted the horse which he had received from the chief, and proceeded to take his station among the Gholams, who were on the point of setting forth on their journey.

Abbas Khan, the chief of the tribe, was a fine portly man, of about forty years of age;

endowed with moderate genius, but possessed of a kind and generous heart, and greatly free from the prevailing vices of his countrymen; he was adored by his tribe, who looked upon him in the light of a father, and he, indeed, well deserved their love.

As the cavalcade were passing the spot where Feridoon had met the Prince Mahomed Reza, the young Eliaut, who happened to be the last of the party, perceived a glittering object on the roadside; he dismounted, and discovered it be a ring, which to his joyful surprise, he recognised as one he had seen on the finger of Zoraya. To seize upon, and to conceal it within the folds(5) of his cap was the work of a moment. A change immediately came over his spirit: just before he had been oppressed with the most gloomy sadness; now, an expression of joyous hope spread itself over his countenance. He hailed the discovery of the gem as a fortunate omen, portending hap-

piness, and bidding him cease to despair ; a calm gradually dispersed itself over his frame, he offered up a silent prayer to heaven, and rejoining his companions, proceeded on his way with a lightened heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming, with purple and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue waves roll mighty on deep Galilee.

THE sun was about to set, after a magnificent day, behind the lofty Alwend mountains, when a large party of horsemen were winding their way along a rocky defile, leading from the valley of Sennar. They were evidently not Persians, as their manner of riding, and general deportment, differed extremely from that of the men of Iran. On a nearer approach, also, their large turbans,(1) together with their

accoutrements, betokened them to belong to some Koordish tribe. In front of the troop, mounted on a spirited Arab horse, rode a young man whose proud carriage, and dignified air, added to the respect evinced towards him, by his companions, showed that he was the chieftain. The appearance of Allah Verdee Khan, surnamed the Karah Kaplan, for it was he, well warranted the high eulogium passed upon it by Moorad, in the caravanserai of Hamadan. Although below the middle height, his frame was so athletic and well knit, and his shoulders so broad and muscular, that it was formed for deeds of prowess and of strength ; indeed, it might have been doubted, whether he would not have almost proved a match for his gigantic follower, Moorad. His face, which was of a light complexion, was handsome and prepossessing, and the spectator, while gazing upon his countenance, which was calm and mild, could scarcely have credited the

strange tales current, concerning his cruel and revengeful disposition.

His eye, which was grey, was keen and penetrating, but possessed neither a fierce, or a malignant expression ; on the contrary, judging by that organ, the supposition would have been, that the owner was of a gentle, and intelligent character. Karah Kaplan, however, belied the expression both of his eye, and countenance ; although brave in the extreme, his courage was untempered with humanity, his passions fierce and unmanageable, and his disposition cruel, scornful, and tyrannical ; still, unlike the generality of his countrymen, he was not avaricious, for although he was constantly enriching himself with plunder, he profusely lavished the wealth thus procured, among his adherents, to whom this trait of generosity, so unusual in Persia, had much endeared him.

Ruling over one of the largest, and most powerful tribes of Koordistan, his name was feared both far and near, and although several

expeditions had been sent out against him, by the Persian government, on account of the dreadful depredations at times committed by him and his followers, his power still remained unabated, while his enemies had ever returned discomfited and unsuccessful. It was also currently reported, that he was in secret correspondence with several great personages at the court of the Shah, (Fath Ali), who for certain large bribes which annually found their way to Teheran, secretly managed the forces that went against the tribe of Karah Kaplan should never be of any material strength, or number. This was, however, only surmised, for there were many who were wont to observe that the Koordish Chieftain, would prove a match for the largest army that could be collected for the purpose of attacking his valleys ; as besides the natural strength of his own tribe, he was in strict defensive and offensive alliance with several others.

The band, at the head of which Allah Verdee

Khan was riding, consisted of about a hundred warriors, well mounted, and completely armed with sword, shield, gun, pistols and lance. By the anxious expression visible on their visages, it was evident that they were engaged upon some important affair, and were expecting momentarily to enter into action. On different ridges of the surrounding hills, the figures of horsemen cut the sky, who appeared to be on the look out.

“By Ali!” cried Allah Verdee, turning to the Koord, who rode nearest to him, after some time passed in silence, “they tarry on their way; I fear that darkness will cover these mountains before they pass this spot. How much longer shall we have the sun?”

“So please your Highness,” returned the Koord addressed, “for an hour and a half more, we shall not want the light of day, and after that we have a good moon, so that our prey cannot possibly escape us.”

“ I would, however, prefer to attack them by day,” said Karah Kaplan ; “ for otherwise we may lose much of our booty, for want of light sufficient to guide us ; besides which, our marksmen cannot take such true aim by moonlight, and I place great reliance on their prowess, in these attacks, as the caravans on this road are strong in numbers. May their fathers be burned !”

“ But, Sahib,” answered the other, “ the more in numbers, the greater the booty ; we are a match for half a thousand caravan travellers, who are seldom all of them fighting characters ; the Persian merchant, though he loves his money-bags, does not often like to defend them with cold steel.”

“ Ay, truly,” observed Karah Kaplan, “ the Persian who buys and sells, is in general as cowardly as he is rascally ; he is out of his element when not seated in his booth in the bazaar. But you mistook me just now, when I talked

of the numbers of this caravan being great: I meant that without the aid of daylight, many might escape in the darkness; however, In-shallah! that will not be the case, as I perceive one of the videttes approaching; he must bring tidings of our intended victims."

This last remark was called forth by the rapid advance of a Koord, who was proceeding at full speed, unheeding the rugged nature of the ground. On the arrival of this man within speaking distance, Allah Verdee addressed him with :

"How now, Goorban Ali, what news?"

"So please your highness," returned the retainer, "the foremost mules are not half a fursuk from this spot, and are moving rapidly hitherward."

"Good!" said the chieftain, "we must lie in ambush till they are within our clutches. Here Saadi, make the signal for the videttes to join us. Alhamdellillah! there will be light

sufficient to ensure the complete success of our undertaking. Comrades ! prepare instantly for action."

The signal was made, and the stragglers having been collected, Karah Kaplan proceeded to give the necessary direction for attack, the spot chosen for which, was one most admirably adapted for the lawless purpose. About three hundred yards distant, the pass widened, and formed a small valley, completely engulfed in the bosom of the mountains, and flanked by high rocks from the summit of which a tofinkchee(2) might himself, in perfect safety, take aim at any object below. The sole entrances to this valley were by two very narrow passes at either end, where high projecting rocks formed natural hiding places for a band of the size of that of the Koords. The best marksmen of the troop were despatched to the heights, with orders to fire upon the caravan as soon as the attack should com-

mence, while Allah Verdee despatched half of his remaining followers towards the further extremity of the defile, where the caravan would be obliged to make its exit; while with the other half, he proceeded to conceal himself behind the rocks commanding the entrance, for it was his intention to allow the whole caravan to pass into the valley before the attack should be made, in order that it might be between two foes, and exposed to the fire from the tofinkchis above.

About half an hour after the Koords had taken their position, the tinkling of bells gave evidence of the approach of the foremost mules. Onward came the unsuspecting travellers, happy in fancied security, and totally unaware of the trap set for them. The caravan was of large size, being composed of above six hundred heavily laden mules, conducted by a numerous band of muleteers; in front rode a number of merchants, owners of the goods

that were thus being conveyed to Bagdad. They appeared in high spirits, and were enlivening the tedium of the journey with songs and merriment.

The Koords, as they lay in ambush, beheld with inexpressible satisfaction their valuable prize enter, without suspicion, into the guarded valley; they observed, that although the travellers far exceeded their own party in numbers, still they were by no means so well prepared to meet a foe.

No sooner had the hindermost mule passed the band, than Karah Kaplan gave the appointed signal; it was responded to by a loud hurrah, as his followers, dashing their spurs into their horses' flanks, flew joyfully to the attack. Like the leopard pouncing on the unsuspecting antelope, or the hawk upon the heedless partridge, was the rush of the assailants, and the unhappy Persians, attacked on all sides, were surrounded in an instant. The

object of the marauders did not at first appear so much for violence, as for the capture of booty; the cords that bound the loads to the backs of the mules, were immediately cut, and the bales falling to the ground were ripped open, and rifled of their contents. All heavy and lumbering articles were thrown aside, while goods of a lighter material, such as shawls from the looms of Cashmere, silks from Yezd,(3) and brocades from Mazanderan(4) were seized with avidity, and made up into small bundles with such dexterity as evidently proclaimed how practised were the Koords in their profession of plundering.

It must not, however, be imagined that the owners of the merchandise remained passive during the above proceedings; on the contrary, although many merely tore their beards, and rent their clothes in anguish, without attempting any resistance, still the majority of the merchants, and Chervadors who were mounted,

collected together and essayed most valiantly to repel the robbers ; the fight was, however, not of long continuance, for as before mentioned the travellers, although numerous, were inferior to their adversaries in arms and horses ; besides which, the marksmen from the heights above, dealt deadly destruction among them, and after a desperate, though short conflict, victory declared itself in favour of the Koords ; while the Persians that survived were compelled to throw down their arms and surrender in order, flight being impossible to save their lives.

Each Koordish horseman having collected as much booty as he could conveniently carry, the Tofinkchis were called down from their posts, and Karah Kaplan gave the order to secure some prisoners, and to retire ; several merchants who seemed, as far as the dusky shades of evening would permit, to be of a superior order to their companions, together

with some women, were on this command seized, and being bound to their horses, the reins of the animals were held by some robbers, and the daring band galloped off as fast as the ruggedness of the road would allow, leaving the remainder of the caravan to bewail the heavy bereavement they had sustained, and to look to their killed and wounded. The loss of the Koords had been small; three only having been slain, while double the number had received wounds of consequence. The former having been stripped of every mark by which they could be recognised were left on the field, while the latter, their wounds being bound in a hasty manner, were mounted on the easiest going steeds belonging to the party, and supported by their friends, accompanied them in their rapid progress across the hills.

The spirits of the Koordish chief were elated to intoxication, with the success of the expe-

dition ; as he spurred his gallant courser to its utmost speed, he cast around him glances of such exultation, that the earth over which he was moving, seemed in his opinion scarcely worthy to support him. Ever and anon, he would beckon some favourite follower to his side, and give a hasty command ; at other times he would call to his band to quicken their pace, and rate them for their inactivity. In this manner he proceeded for above an hour ; the moon had risen, and was lighting up with her beams the wild and rugged scenery through which the Koords were passing, showing the dangerous nature of the path ; notwithstanding, they still held on their rapid course, nor did they slacken their pace until they had arrived at a deep gorge, where several black tents were pitched, from which issued various wild looking men, who greeted the Karah Kaplan with the most enthusiastic cheers.

Crowding round their beloved chief, the

band assisted him to dismount, and conducted him to one of the larger tents ; where, after he had washed his face and hands, a repast was placed before him, which in comparison to the place it was served in, was splendid. The Khan did not remain long at his meal ; indeed, he appeared to set but slight value on the luxuries before him, although the dishes were of solid gold, as well as the tray which held them. The sherbets also, which were of excellent quality, were contained in china bowls, of the most exquisite workmanship. Had however, the materials been of copper, or common clay, they could not have excited less attention, in the mind of the Koordish chieftain, who having hastily satisfied his appetite, directed the dishes to be removed, and commanded the plunder to be brought before him. This was accordingly done, when having taken an inventory of every thing, he proceeded to divide the spoil among his adherents, in such

an impartial manner, that strange to say, not one person was dissatisfied with his share, but all retired praising the wisdom and justice of their chief, and extolling his courage and generosity to the skies. Thus it was that, by being unswayed by avarice, the Karah Kaplan possessed such power over his adherents, that there was scarcely a single man of the tribe, who would not willingly have laid down his life for him.

At dawn of day, the cavalcade was again in motion, and while a division of the Koords, with the heavy baggage and prisoners, proceeded in a southerly direction, the remainder, under the conduct of their leader, directed their course towards the north-west. Having continued their route for an hour, they arrived at a spot, covered with the most delicious verdure, where a beautiful spring took its rise. This place is named the Maiden's spring, some suppose from the clearness, and purity of its

waters, while others assert, that it owes its appellation to an old forgotten legend.

Here the band halted, and dismounting, loosened their saddle girths, and each taking some provisions from his wallet, prepared to eat his morning's repast. A small carpet was spread for Karah Kaplan, who reclining upon a cushion, proceeded to inhale the smoke of a kaliaun which was brought bubbling and sparkling to him. Having finished smoking, and partaken of some coffee, he remained some time, intently gazing upon the defile which led through the mountains; at length he began to show signs of impatience, and turning to his kaleaunjee, bid him inquire whether any signs of Moorad's approach were visible.

"So please your highness!" answered the attendant, on his return from obeying the injunction of his lord, "there is as yet no appearance of the Beg's approach."

"What can have delayed him!" said Allah

Verdee, "it is now a full hour, after the time he should have been here; surely he cannot have failed."

"Afakerillah!" replied the pishkidmud, "your slave begs to represent, that Aga Moorad, is not a man to be foiled in any scheme he undertakes; so please your gracious highness excepting your highness's self, his equal is not."

"True!" observed Karah Kaplan. "Two or three are little odds to him; should he have failed, it is because he has been overpowered by numbers. I would sooner believe that a Hamadanee, or an Azerbijanee was superior to a Koord, than that Moorad had been vanquished in single combat; but still my mind misgives me. Time flies, and he comes not."

"I will hie me to yonder peak," said the attendant, "which overlooks the road by which he ought to come, and myself keep watch for him."

"What use is there in that!" observed the

Khan peevishly. "Will your looking out quicken his approach; keep to your own duty, and bring me another kaliaun."

More time elapsed, and still no signs of the expected Koord were forthcoming; at length, Karah Kaplan, his patience being quite worn out, was in the act of ordering his followers to mount, when the cry of "Moorad! Moorad!" rang upon his ear. Springing to his feet and rushing to the spot whence the cry proceeded, he eagerly exclaimed,

"Where? where? and by whom accompanied?"

"We cannot perceive him distinctly yet," answered the man who had given the alarm; "but were I to state my opinion, I should say that he was alone."

"Slave, thou liest!" cried Karah Kaplan in a fury; "but no," he continued, gazing earnestly on the approaching figure; "would to Allah you had lied."

This last observation was caused by Karah Kaplan's observing that Moorad was alone ; in breathless suspense, he waited until the latter was within a short distance, when to his astonishment, he observed his trusty adherent was stooping to his saddle-bow, and was riding in a manner that showed he was severely wounded. An application of his heel to his horse's flank, having brought the Khan to his follower's side, one instant served to show, that all his well laid schemes were nipped in the bud ; for in that moment, he beheld that the sword arm of Moorad hung useless by his side ; that his scabbard was empty, and his face pale, while his clothes were daubed with blood. On perceiving his chief, the wounded man with a last effort reined in his steed, and attempted to speak ; but exhausted by the exertion, ere he could give utterance to the words which trembled on his tongue, he fell fainting to the ground.

CHAPTER XV.

Far stretched on either side, a shapely file
Of fluted columns lift th' incumbent pile ;
Where once, rich blazoned on the bossy stone
In sculptured pomp the spoils of battle shone.

RICKARDS.

IN a former chapter it has been mentioned, that the Shah of Persia had, according to annual custom, summoned the different governors of the provinces, as well as the Begler Begs of the greater cities to join his encampment upon the plain of Sultaneah. It will be necessary to give a short description of this spot, which will play a conspicuous part in the succeeding narrative.

The city of Sultaneah was built by Sultan Khodabundeh,(1) and made by him the capital of his dominions ; which dignity it continued to sustain, during the reigns of that monarch's immediate successors. It was ornamented by many fine edifices ; but the most splendid of which any vestige remains, is the sepulchre of its founder.

This city is now completely deserted ; and as it was entirely built of bricks, baked by the heat of the sun, there are but few remnants of its former grandeur. Part of the mausoleum of Mahomed Khodabundah, as observed above, still remains : and there is enough to show, that it has once been a magnificent building. The diameter is one hundred and twenty three feet, and the elevation of the chief dome one hundred and nineteen. The tomb is in the centre, and some of the marble, of which it was constructed, is still preserved ; the whole however is dilapidated ; and the late Shah Fath Alⁱ

used some of the materials to build a summer house, where it was his custom to reside, when his army was encamped during the spring and summer months, upon the fine plain of Sultaneah.

The modern Kings of Persia have palaces in many parts of their dominions; whither they resort for the climate, or for the chace, or for the purpose of reviewing their troops; to these palaces are attached villages, in which provisions are collected for the use of the court, as soon as the motions of the king are decided. Besides his summer-house at Sultaneah, he has others at Ajaun near Tabreez, at the Bagh-i-Feen, at Jairood near Tehran, at Chesmeh Ali in Khorassan, at the Bagh Zemrood near Demawend, at Zavieh on the road to Hamadan; and many others of which it would be too tedious to make any enumeration.

The summer-house of the Shah at Sultaneah

is situated to the west of the village, and like that of Ajaun, is built on an artificial hillock.—At the time of our narrative it consisted of a large dewankhaneh, which formed the principal front of the building, and of an anderoon. The hall was supported by two wooden gilded pillars, and looked upon a garden laid out in walks, shaded by poplar and willow trees. The whole was surmounted by a Baba Khaneh(2) screened by curtains, whither it was the custom of Fath Ali to retire and enjoy the breeze, and the view of his camp.

Around this building, to a very great extent, at various intervals, was spread the camp, consisting of tents, and pavilions of various colours and denominations. An order had been issued, that every tent, in the camp should be pitched with its entrance immediately facing the Shah's temporary habitation, by which it was intended that every one who came forth, should bow the head to the royal

abode—an invention in dignities scarcely to be exceeded by those of any monarch who has swayed the sceptre of Persia, or of any other kingdom in the world. The king thus became the centre of a great wheel, and he was so completely hemmed in by his troops, that if an enemy had appeared, it would have been impossible to get at him, without first cutting a road through the labyrinths of ropes, which sustained the tents which surrounded him.

The Shah zadehs, who had arrived in the suite of the Persian monarch, or who had come to pay their respect to their royal father, were lodged in large pavilions, surrounded by the distinguishing Serperdeh ;(3) the Viziers and other chief officers of the court were in similar tents, but without the outward screen, excepting those who were in such favour as to be permitted that honour, usually only allowed to royal persons, or to chiefs of tribes in their own encampments. The troops were disposed

of in small tents of every description, from the two poled pavilion of the commander of a regiment, to the miserable routee of the private serbaz. As the Shah's army was mostly composed of men drawn from the different tribes, each tribe was encamped in separate divisions ; the Baktiarees, the Afshars, the Irakees, the Shah-i-fesuds ; also some Koordish tribes, who acknowledged the supremacy of the Persian king, and others, were all stationed by lot or compartments ; but notwithstanding this attempt at regularity, such was the intermixture of men and cattle, tents and shops, and hot baths, of the instruments of war, and of the luxuries of private ease, that all appearance of order was lost. The tents of the horsemen were known by the long spears being stuck upright at their entrance, those of the infantry by their muskets and matchlocks. The artillery was situated in the midst of this confusion ; and although they were ar-

ranged in a line, yet nothing could possibly have got them clear of the camp, if they had been required to act at a moment's warning. The king, like the Persian monarchs of old, takes his women with him upon his marches ; but not in such great numbers, and also allows his nobles to do the same. The Persians enjoy as many luxuries in their tents, as they do in their houses ; and their habits of migration have taught them great facilities in the manner of transporting their baggage. Many of the great personages have tents with boilers attached to them, which they convert into hot baths, as soon as they become stationary at one place for any length of time.

In the Persian camp was a small stream of excellent water, running from north to south, and which held its course through the Ordoobazar, or the camp market ; which, as in the days of Cyrus, always accompanies the camp, and is regulated in nearly the same manner as

it was of old, and where provisions were brought to, from all the country round.

The number of Persians collected together at this camp, consisted of nearly fifty thousand persons, of which nearly one half was military, and the other camp followers. This addition to the population of the province began soon to be felt, for provisions became scarce, and consequently dear ; from this circumstance, trivial as it may appear, an idea may be formed of the difficulties, which an European army would have to encounter, even in the most fertile and flourishing parts of the country, aided to the utmost extent by its government ; how much greater, therefore, must those difficulties be, how insurmountable must they prove, should the government, instead of aiding, throw every possible obstacle in the path of the passing army.

It was to this camp that Mehtee Khan, the Begler Beg of Hamadan, had with other noble-

men proceeded in order to pay homage to his sovereign, in whose good opinion he considered himself to have a high situation, as among other many favours and privileges which he enjoyed, was that of having his pavilion surrounded by a serperdeh. Little, however, did the Begler Beg imagine that such a privilege had gained him many bitter, though secret enemies, among whom was numbered, the wily Meerza Sadek, the favourite counsellor of Mahomed Reza Meerza, prince governor of the province of Hamadan. Little, also, was the unsuspecting nobleman aware, that he had undesignedly, though deeply offended that intriguing courtier, by neglecting to rise one morning on receiving a visit from him at Hamadan.(4) Meerza Sadek, indeed, had taken this neglect as an intended insult, and had sworn to make amends to himself, by devising the most signal revenge upon Mehtee Khan, and irretrievably working his ruin.

CHAPTER XVI.

My Lord, it were to no purpose—my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts.

QUENTIN DURWARD.

It was not yet noon, (although that time was evidently near at hand, from the appearance of numerous Mollahs who were hastening to their various posts, in order to proclaim the hour and call the faithful to prayers,) when a young and beautiful girl was reclining in a pensive attitude, beneath the folds of a large tent, which, forming one of a set surrounded by a serperdeh, showed that it belonged to the female establishment of some Khan of great wealth and high rank,

and who must have been in high favour with the Shah, to have been allowed such a privilege.

Zoraya, for it was her, was no longer the happy maiden, whose portrait has already been given in a former chapter; on the contrary, care seemed to have taken up its abode in her bosom, and marked its vicinity in her forehead. Various attempts made by her to rally her spirits proved unavailing, for did she call for her kalem done and her tablets, in order to wile away the time by composing, it was but to throw them aside the next moment; did she take up her Koran, her Hafiz, or any other of her books, it was with the same effect; did she try to enter into conversation with her kaneezes, it was but to let it flag after a few observations; indeed, her usual occupations failed in exciting any interest in the mind of the love-sick maiden, for such she was; the image of her heroic deliverer had made too

permanent an impression on her heart to be lightly driven therefrom ; although such a feeling was scarcely acknowledged by herself, she loved, devotedly, fondly loved ; she loved as woman ought to love, she loved as *some* do love, for she loved her preserver for himself, for his noble qualities, for his open hearted, generous disposition.

Zoraya was sitting in this pensive state, when the curtain that covered the entrance into the tent was drawn aside, and the portly form of Mehtee Khan appeared. Casting a penetrating glance upon his daughter ; who had risen on his entrance, he approached, and taking her hand in his, inquired after her health in a kind and affectionate tone ; Zoraya answered at random, when the Begler Beg signing to the kaneezes to retire, observed,

“ My child, you can conceive the reason of my coming ; our heads are about to touch the skies, for his Royal Highness Mahomed Reza

Meerza, has done our house the exalted honour of demanding your hand in marriage."

"Well, my father," answered Zoraya, suppressing her emotion; "and what would you have me do?"

"Do," cried the Khan; "why rejoice at the very prospect of such an alliance. Say, my child, could your heart ever hope for a prouder offer?"

"Father," returned the maiden; "when you say a prouder offer, perhaps you are right; but were you to talk of such a marriage producing happiness, there may be more opinions than one with regard to it."

"How, Zoraya," said the Begler Beg, "can the interior of a prince's harem lack happiness?"

"It can," said the daughter; "indeed the humble cottage of the Rayat often possesses more true happiness than the palace of a king; in the one, true affection may exist and help

to smooth away the difficulties of life ; but in the other never, or grant its existence, its duration is short and fleeting. The lord of a numerous harem may, for a while, conceive what he misnames love, for one of its inmates ; but much time will not pass away, ere his temporary passion be forgotten. I know this to be the case ; I have visited many anderoons of such a description."

"What mean these words," cried her father, in astonishment ; "are you mad, Zoraya, to give utterance to such unheard of notions ?"

"I am not mad," replied the maiden. "O no, Alhamdellillah, my brain is well ; I merely spoke from conviction."

"Conviction of what ?" said the Begler Beg ; "conviction, that being chosen in marriage by a prince is likely to produce unhappiness ; nay, surely you jest."

"I am not given to jesting," said Zoraya, "I speak what I feel, and furthermore add,

Inshallah ! may I never enter his highness's anderoon, save as a guest to one of his wives."

" Wallah, Billah," cried Mehtee Khan, " what mean you, Zoraya, surely you have been struck by the evil eye."

" No evil eye has cast its baneful influence over me," replied the maiden ; " my speech comes from my heart, which bids me shun the prince's offer."

" Child," said the Begler Beg, knitting his brow ; " once more I ask you, do you speak in earnest."

" I do," replied Zoraya.

" Unhappy girl," observed her father, with vehemence ; " you know not what you say ; to give such an answer to the prince would be the bringing down of certain ruin on our house ; say what reasons can you have for this unwonted conduct ?"

" I cannot love the prince," said the maiden.

“Love !” cried Mehtee Khan, lengthening out the word ; “who ever heard of such an idea entering the head of a Persian girl. Love the prince ? Whoever expected, whoever dreamed of such a thing being necessary.”

“Father,” returned the daughter, with firmness ; “I bestow not my hand on any one, save that I love him devotedly, unalterably.

“And how is such ardent love to arise,” said the Begler Beg, scornfully ; “are you not a mussulman girl ?”

“Alhamdellillah, I am,” cried Zoraya ; “but that does not prevent my having the feelings of a woman.”

“Say rather of a mad woman,” cried the Khan, in anger ; “come, come, child, no more of this mummary, prepare to obey me ; the prince demands your hand, and you must give it.”

“I cannot,” replied the daughter. “In all

else I would obey you : but on this occasion it is impossible."

"Zoraya," ejaculated Mehtee Khan, furiously ; "rouse me not to madness. I have calmly listened to all your nonsense hitherto ; but more of it will wear out my patience. Listen : once for all, I command you to accept the prince, without hesitation ; disobey me at your peril."

"Allah !" exclaimed the maiden, in an agony of grief, "have mercy upon me. O my beloved father, did you know all the motives which impel me, you would not thus rend your daughter's heart."

"In the name of our blessed prophet," said the Begler Beg, "what motive possessing a misal of sense, can you bring forth in extenuation of your folly."

"I love another," answered Zoraya, with hesitation ; then as if ashamed of her confession, she hid her face in her hands.

“Nay, by the blessed Imams!” roared out the Khan, “this is too much; Zoraya! I doat on you; but notwithstanding all my affection, this conduct will drive me into a frenzy. I know what you mean: your thoughts are running on the baseborn, accursed peasant with whom the prince discovered you alone on the plain; may his ancestors’ grave be defiled, may they grill in the lowest hell!”

“Father, yon peasant saved your daughter’s honour,” replied Zoraya, drawing herself up to her full height, “had it not been for him, I should now have been in the power of Karah Kaplan.”

“He did but his duty,” said the Begler Beg, who seemed rather confused at his daughter’s words, and evidently speaking at variance to his feelings; “had he not acted as he did, being accidentally on the spot, he would have deserved to have been torn asunder by wild

horses ; speak not child of such a low born, vile outcast."

"Low born, he is not," said Zoraya. "Vile he cannot be. Shame ! shame, on you, father, to return with abuse the obligation you owe to him. What ! stigmatise with such opprobrious terms the preserver of your daughter. Alas, my Lord ! I can scarcely recognise the noble nature of my father in such ungrateful conduct."

As she spoke, the form of the Persian maiden dilated, her eye flashed with indignation, and her frame trembled with emotion. Her father was moved at the sight ; but dissembling his feelings, he again urged her, though in a milder manner to offer no opposition to his wishes ; at the same time giving her to understand, that it was out of his power to send a refusal to such a person as Mahomed Reza Meerza.

"Therefore, my Zoraya," he observed, "not-

withstanding all your inclination to the contrary, you must be his bride—fate so ordains ; had any one less powerful asked you in marriage, if the alliance had not met with your approbation, your wishes should have been acceded to ; but, my child, it is equally dangerous to cross a hungry lion's path, as to thwart the will of Shah zadeh. Allah above knows what endless dirt the anger of the prince might shower upon our house ; therefore you see that you must obey me."

"O Allah !" cried the unhappy girl, throwing herself upon her knees ; "have mercy upon me, since my parent deserts me."

"Alas !" said the Begler Beg, softened at the expression of agony that pervaded his daughter's features, "you wrong me ; what I am doing is for your good, you will confess as much ere long ; nay, fret not, it is vain to contend against fate, you must, you shall be the bride of the Prince Mahomed Reza."

“ Father, dearest father !” exclaimed the maiden, in a beseeching and agonised voice ; “ it is said you loved my mother with an affection unusual in this country ; and that when she lay at the point of death, you promised to love me, for her sake. In remembrance therefore of her, have mercy on your daughter—the sole surviving offspring of the wife of your heart. I fervently vow, that the very idea of this union is hateful to me, and I cannot even contemplate its possibility without trembling. O force me not to bestow my hand where I cannot give my heart. In my departed mother’s name, I implore you to tell the prince, that *my* entreaties are the cause of your declining the honour of his alliance ; in my mother’s name I speak. Thanks be to Allah, I see you relent, I see the tear starting to your eye ; my father ! my father ! now you are truly my father.”

The agitated girl, at these words, threw her

arms around her parent's neck, and hung there in a close embrace; her beautiful face was bedewed with tears, and her bosom panted with emotion. The Khan gazed upon her in silence, the devotion he had felt for her mother burned fresh, unforgotten in his breast, and all other feelings gave way to that of the parent. Gently releasing himself from her embrace, he laid the maiden on an ottoman, and having affectionately kissed her pallid brow, rushed hastily from the tent.

CHAPTER XVII.

His brow was marked with wrinkles, while his cheek
was wan and pale,
And his long dark dishevelled hair waved wildly in the
gale.

“NOT seen him, Ali? why man! where
have your eyes been. At least, you must have
heard of him; for your ears are long enough,
to shame a jackass.”

“Hold your raillery, foozool; if my ears are
long, so is my arm, as you will find to your
cost, if you let your tongue run on at that rate.
Do you wish me to burn your father, that you
provoke me thus?”

“Nay, friend Ali, be not such a dewaneh
as to seek a quarrel on such light grounds.

I never meant to provoke you, but having understood, that you have neither seen or heard of the famous wandering soothsayer, who has arrived in our camp, I could not help giving vent to some feeling of surprise."

"Why, so?"

"Because, I believed his coming was already bruited north, south, east and west. Why, since the last Imaum, his equal has never appeared."

"By the head of the Shah, you have sharpened my curiosity ; come now, tell me who, and what he is, to what he is like, and whom, and why, he has come ; in the meanwhile, I will prepare a kaliaun. Proceed, I am all ears and attention."

"I know you are all ears, at least two thirds of you ; nay frown not, I cannot help joking, were you to kill me for it."

"At any rate, I wish you would make your

jokes scarce, when you speak to me, for I tell you, I will not hear them ; to your story therefore at once, and see whether you cannot proceed in a straight forward manner, without blackening my face, with your devil's tongue."

" Well then, Ali, listen and I will speak like a Locman : you are aware that I kept watch last night, near the royal tent, while you, and a dozen other Lookees, were drinking your very brains out, with arrack, which, by the bye, may account for your natural ass-born stupidity being increased tenfold this morning."

" By Mahomed, this is too bad. Padersookhteh ! may your ancestors' graves be defiled, may your liver turn white, and may you, and all your dogs of relations grill, and rot in Jehanum, and may I share their fate, if I stop another instant, listening to your fool's jabbering."

" Nay, Ali, hear me, one word. Ha ! ha !

he is off, and without staying to hear my tale about this fortune-teller; wonderful dog's son he must be, to possess such little curiosity !”

The subject that had given rise to the above conversation, between two Serbaz of the army of the Shah, was that on the preceding day, a fortune-teller, of striking appearance, had entered the camp, and by his extraordinary manner, had excited universal attention. His height was unusually lofty, and his whole frame formed in an herculean mould. He bore in his countenance, marks of suffering and rigid fasting, while his brow was wrinkled far beyond his years; his face was pale, and emaciated, and nearly covered by the locks, that fell in long ringlets from his head, over his shoulders. The fire of his eye, however, which was most brilliant, shone even fiercer from the wreck it lighted up. His dress was of the coarsest possible manufacture; while,

his loins were girded with a rough camel's hair cloth.

On entering the camp, he had taken his station nearly in the centre, and having pitched a small dirty tent, had installed himself therein, and commenced reciting, in a rapid manner, passages from the Koran, and verses from the different poets, at the same time giving out, that all who needed talismans would receive them from him. His tent was soon besieged by applicants for charms against the evil eye and disease, and numberless were the scraps of paper distributed, on which, sentences of the Koran were written. The fortune-teller gave them away, with a calm gravity, now and then broken by a vehement recital of verses, containing exhortations to Mussulmen. There were many, also, who anxious to learn their fate, hastened to have their fortunes told, and all by the answers returned, seemed to be impressed with the utmost respect for the soothsayer.

“ Among others, who approached the abode of the fortune-teller, was Feridoon, neatly equipped in the garb of a Gholam ; on his approaching the tent of the wise man, the latter on observing his features, gave a sudden start, and bending his brow, exclaimed in a satirical tone,

“ Well, young man, what do you require ; if perchance you wish to search into the hidden mysteries of futurity, let me advise you to pause ; it is easy to read your fate on your brow.”

“ I had merely sauntered hither from curiosity,” observed Feridoon, meekly ; “ but since your words appear to imply a want of courage on my part, speak, I am ready to listen, without flinching, to your prophetic words.”

“ Boast not too soon :” returned the other ; “ in the lines of your face, I can read of coming toil, and suffering.”

“ Every mortal has troubles to bear,” said

the Eliaut; "if it be fated, that I am to undergo misfortune, I cannot repine; the will of Allah must be fulfilled."

"But, young man," answered the fortune-teller, "yours will be no common fate. Useless pining after an object far too exalted for a base peasant, is your present lot; hereafter, a terrible and violent death at the hands of one you have grievously wronged."

"Man! thou speakest falsely!" retorted Feridoon, "I never wronged mortal. Spare thy prophecies, until thou canst foretell the truth; for at least in this instance, thou art eating dirt, and thy words are mingled with error."

"Eliaut, thou liest thyself," replied the fakeer(1) sternly; "mark my words:—I see blood upon thy hand, and freshly spilt; but the hour of retribution is nigh."

Feridoon started at these words, but fixed his gaze firmly upon the wild man's visage;

he, for a moment, imagined that the features were not unfamiliar to him, still he could not call to mind, when or where he had before beheld them. At all events, it was evident that the fortune-teller nourished some secret hatred against him ; why, and wherefore was inexplicable ; wishing, however, to know more, he addressed the man in a respectful manner avoiding, as much as possible, exciting his anger.

“ O sir !” he exclaimed, “ you may be a wise, and a great man, and one favoured by Allah, if so, can you not afford me some clue to avoid the fate you have predicted.”

“ Forget the insane project which you have hitherto nourished, like poison in your imagination,” was the answer. “ Forget her !”

“ Whom !” ejaculated the trembling youth, “ as you are a true believer, tell me whom I must forget.”

“ I must not name her,” answered the

soothsayer ; “ all I am suffered to proclaim to you is—this. Forget the bright vision which hath crossed your path ; drive away from your brain the airy castles which romance hath built therein. Go ! I can say no more.”

“ But tell me,” cried Feridoon, “ where you have learned my history, for it appears, you know some circumstances concerning it ; surely we have met before.”

“ Never !” cried the fortune-teller ; “ never, until this moment have we met. Know, young scoffer, that my knowledge has been attained by long fasting, and devoting myself to the reading of the planets, which appear to my practised eye, plain as a well written volume. But go ! once for all I proclaim that, unless you take heed, your’s will be no enviable fate.”

“ Come, master Gholam,” cried a Serbaz, who had been listening near the spot, “ methinks you have heard enough to content any

reasonable person. Make way, therefore, and suffer others to question this venerable man."

Feridoon, although anxious to hear more, was now obliged to retire ; before, however, finally quitting the spot, he observed in a low tone, " Sahib, we must meet again."

" When and where you please," returned the other contemptuously ; " at present, however, I must attend to the wants of others."

Many persons of both sexes succeeded the Eliaut, and from the sapient answers they received to their numerous questions retired, convinced of the great wisdom of the fortune-teller. It was not only before his little tent, that he divulged the secrets of futurity, for he was sent for, in order to be consulted by the inmates of several anderoons, and numberless were the scraps of paper, upon which he was obliged to write charms. Among other tents, favoured by a visit from the holy man, was that of Zoraya, the giddy Nargis having,

unbidden, sought him out, and told him to follow her. On receiving the summons, his eye, before bright in the extreme, was lighted up with such unusual brilliancy, that the girl was unable to repress a feeling of uneasiness ; but this soon vanished, as the astrologer resumed his wonted appearance, and rising, answered calmly : “ Daughter, proceed, I am ready.”

The kaneez required not a second injunction, but turned her steps towards the canvas wall which surrounded the anderoon tents of Meh-tee Khan, and having entered therein in company with the fakeer, the girl proceeded to the chief tent, and bade her companion remain outside, but near enough to answer any question that might be put to him from within.

Had any one narrowly watched the fortune-teller, as he obeyed this mandate, he would have observed an unintelligible expression on his features ; it would have seemed a mixture of scorn, triumph and animosity ; it could also have been seen that he was closely remarking

every thing around with the utmost attention ; not a single object appeared to have escaped the notice of his vigilant eye and in truth nothing had escaped it, for the position of every thing around, to the very cords and tent ropes, had been studiously imprinted on his brain. He had not long been in this situation, when his attention was excited by overhearing voices in subdued conversation from within ; but low-toned as they were, the ear of the listener was sufficiently acute to enable him to catch some of the words.

“ You do not mean to say, Nargis,” said a soft musical voice, “ that you have been so foolish as to bring him here. You have acted wrong ; what have I to do with fortune-tellers ? ”

“ Alas, khanum,” said Nargis, “ be not angry, I meant all for the best ; let me intreat you, therefore, to put one or two questions to the man about—you know what I mean ; I can read your thoughts.”

“Peace ! foolish girl,” answered Zoraya for it was her that had been addressed by Nargis ; “ peace ; have I not told you frequently that I disbelieve the power of man to foretell future events ;—such power is vested in Allah alone.”

The answer to this observation was uttered in too low a voice to be heard by the listener : but it was evident that the girl was attempting to persuade her mistress to question him. However, it was not long before some one approached the entrance of the tent and bid him prepare to exert his power, as he was about to be interrogated.

“ Sahib,” demanded the voice of Nargis, “ are you able to foresee coming events ? ”

“ By the help of the planets, lady, and the permission of Allah,” answered the astrologer, “ there are men who are so gifted and who are able, from their superior wisdom, to warn poor mortals of their future fate.”

“Are you one of those so endowed?” inquired the girl.

“In a slight degree, I am,” was the answer.

“Then, Sahib,” said Nargis, “can you inform me what is to be my future lot?”

“I must either behold your face,” replied the astrologer, “or, should you desire to avoid the unhallowed gaze of man, you must inform me of your age, your name and the place of your birth.”

“My name is Nargis,” answered the kaneez; “I was seventeen on the eighth day of the last month of Mohurram(2) and I was born at Ispahan.”

“Daughter, I must see your palm; stretch it forth from the door. The lines,” he muttered, as he took hold of a delicately formed hand which was protruded; “the lines are strongly marked; past fidelity—deserving of reward—slight coming unhappiness, on account of a beloved object—soon, however, to

cease, and all to end well—a prosperous marriage and a fruitful bed.”

The hand was here hastily withdrawn and a titter from within showed that the owner was undergoing the laughs of her companions.

This state of affairs did not continue long, for several words were spoken to the following purpose :

“Khanum, do not throw this opportunity away.”—“I cannot.”—“Only for this once.”—“Nonsense.”—“May there be a fortunate issue.”—“Well, well, I will, but only to get rid of your importunity.”

The canvass was now again agitated and the voice of Nargis was heard. “Sir,” she cried, “another wishes to know her destiny.”

“I am ready to unfold it to her,” returned the fakeer; “what is the name and age of her who would inquire?”

“Is her name so very necessary to be known?” demanded Nargis.

“It would render the task less difficult, did

I know the name of her who seeks to know her fate ; but if there is a wish to conceal the same, the age and place of her birth will suffice.”

“ On the fourteenth day of the last Ramazan, sixteen years ago, she first beheld the light,” said Nargis, “ at Demawend, near the mountain so called.”

“ It is enough,” answered the wanderer ; “ let her stretch forth her palm.”

There was evidently a strong reluctance to perform this act, but after a short time the required member appeared ; a hand so lovely, fingers so taper, the colour so transparently white, that even the features of the ascetic showed signs of feeling on beholding it ; but these were transient, and were succeeded by a sarcastic curl of the upper lip ; so fiendish was the glance of his eye, that had the owner of the hand beheld it, she must have experienced the greatest alarm.

In a few moments the astrologer exclaimed,

in a solemn and measured tone: "Daughter, this upper line proclaims that you are not happy."

No answer was returned, but the fingers were slightly drawn together at the question.

"You are young to have known unhappiness, lady," continued the fakeer; "grief usually accompanies grey hairs, not the dark locks of sixteen; but stay, what do I behold? Violence—attempts against your freedom—rescue—blood—love! Lady, yours is no common destiny."

The hand was instantly drawn back at these words and a convulsive sob was heard, succeeded by a great bustle within, and some minutes afterwards, the curtain being withdrawn, Nargis appeared, veiled as before.

"O, sir," she exclaimed in great agitation, "you may be a man of God; you may be wise; but, alas your coming has proved a ca-

lamity; you have grievously alarmed my mistress."

"Ha! then it was the Khanum's fate I just now read," observed the fakeer.

"Yes—no—what have I said?" returned Nargis in confusion.

"Fear not, damsel," said the wanderer, "I knew it before. I should be but little conversant with mine art else."

"Wahi!" answered Nargis. "Ashes have fallen on our heads, she fainted at your words. O, why did I conduct you hither; my face will never be white again. Here, take this, and begone."

She presented a heavy purse, the astrologer, however, shook his head and refused to accept it.

"Daughter," he said, "I want not your sordid treasure; think you I sell my knowledge for gold; take back your trash, and know that the wandering fakeer feels happy in his po-

verty and makes no trade of the wisdom he has received from above."

The maiden, surprised at these unexpected words, conveying as they did a rebuke, remained speechless, when her companion observed :

"Damsel, you say your mistress is ill, it is in my power to relieve her ; follow me to my tent, where I will write out a talisman, the salutary effects of which will be great, if my instructions are obeyed."

Thus saying, he left the spot with rapid strides. Nargis having hastily addressed the inmates of the tent followed him to his temporary abode, which the wanderer entered, having commanded the kaneez to remain without ; at the end of a quarter of an hour, he returned with a roll of paper and a large bottle of water.

"Daughter," he said, "the sun is sinking fast below the horizon ; when three hours more shall have run their course, wash off the writing contained in this parchment into this vial

of water, and let your mistress and all her kaneezes drink equal shares thereof; let not one of you fail, as you desire your own and her happiness. Depart in peace, I would be alone."

Nargis would have again addressed him, but he sternly motioned her to withdraw, and the girl being imbued with the greatest reverence towards him, having kissed the hem of his garment, quitted the spot, directing her steps towards her mistress's abode.

No sooner was the wanderer alone than a smile of triumph illuminated his features, he snapped his fingers in ecstasy, and entering into his tent, burst out into a fiendish laugh.

"Ha ! ha ! ha !" he cried, "Allah be praised, to-night beholds the successful termination of our as yet baffled enterprise; by the head of Ali, this day has been fortunate. I hardly hoped for such an opportunity, although I had provided against it; yon writing, and the contents of the vial possess such narcotic powers,

that but a little while after they have drunk of them, it were strange if yonder proud girl and her kaneezes be not wrapped in sleep so sound that a peal of artillery roaring at their ears would not awake them as long as the effects of the potion remain in force—which will be for many hours. The time of action, Alhamdelillah ! has arrived, and if fortune favours, and it seems well inclined, the daughter of the haughty Mehtee Khan, Begler Beg of Hamadan, will grace the anderoon of my beloved master. O, Allah Verdee, what is there that I am not ready to perform in your service ? I am prepared to tread the very paths of Jehanum for you, although you but so lately taunted me with cowardice, and laughed me to scorn ; the oath I then took, either to bring this girl to your camp or perish in the attempt, shall be kept ; I *will* be successful or die. And you, foolish boy, on whom ten thousand curses alight ; you owe your present safety to the

love I bear my chieftain ; nothing less could have prevented my striking you to the heart this day, when you dared to taunt me with falsehood. However, the time will come, when I will doubly, trebly, a hundred fold revenge the ill I received from your hands on the Alwend hills. Prudence, and the service I owe another, now restrains my hands ; but never will I rest in peace till I have you by the throat, and pluck your dog's heart from your craven breast."

Thus soliloquizing the fortune-teller threw himself upon a nummud which lay in the corner of his humble tent. A calm gradually spread itself through his veins, and an expression of tranquillity by degrees usurped the place of ferocity upon his countenance. Opening a wallet which he carried with him, he partook heartily of some refreshment which it contained, after which he drained a bottle of wine, which hung at his side, in the shape of a

leathern powder-flask ; then, lighting a chibouque, he proceeded to enhale the fumes of the tobacco it contained, at the same time conning over all the mazy windings of his intended scheme, and laying down his plans of action. What was his present enterprize will be the subject of another chapter.

NOTES.

The reader, who may find himself at a loss to make out the meaning of the oriental words, and expressions contained in this work, will, on consulting the notes of this, and the two next volumes, receive the required explanation.

NOTES.

CHAPTER I.

(1) *Bazars.*

To a stranger, the bazars are the most amusing places of resort; for here is a continual concourse of people, in which characters of all descriptions, each busied in their different avocations, are seen to pass in rotation. Many of the scenes, so familiar to us in the Arabian Nights, are here realised. The young christian merchant, the lady of quality riding on a mule, attended by her eunuch, and her she-slave, the Jewish physician, the dalal or crier, showing goods about; the barber, Alnascar sitting with his back against the wall, in a very little shop; and thus almost every character may be met with. The mollahs, or the men of the law, are generally to be seen riding about on mules, and they

also account it a dignity, and suited to their character, to ride on *White Asses*, which is a striking illustration of what we read in Judges, v. 10, "*Speak ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment.*"—*Morier's Second Journey through Persia.*

(2) *Hamadan.*

A city of Persia, situated at the foot of the mountain of Alwend. It was once an immense city. It is one of the best watered places in Persia. A building called the sepulchre of Esther and Mordecai, stands here, in a court full of tombs.—*See Morier's Second Journey through Persia.*

(3) *Cabobs.*

Cabobs are small pieces of meat, which are fixed upon a long iron skewer, and roasted over a charcoal fire. When cooked by a skilful hand, they are most delicious.

(4) *Sipping the juice of the pounded berry.*

Coffee is always pounded, never ground in the East.

(5) *Bubbling kaliauns were in the hands of these latter persons.*

The kaliaun is the Persian waterpipe.

(6) *Tombakee.*

Tombakee is a species of tobacco, grown near Shiraz, used solely for kaliauns.

(7) *Eliaut*.

See note 22.

(8) *Ferashes*.

Ferashes are servants, whose duty it is to sweep carpets, walk before their masters in the streets, and also to administer the bastinado.

(9) *The Eliaut became aware of the proximity of women of rank.*

Women of high rank are always preceded by attendants, whose duty it is to clear the road from the crowd, and also to take care that no one looks up at the passing females. In consequence, when a Mussulman sees the approach of women thus accompanied, he is expected to turn his countenance to the wall, or to shade his eyes, under pain of immediate chastisement.

(10) *Harem*

Harem is a general term for the female establishment of a Mahometan; it is also used to denominate that portion of the house, which is set apart for the women.

(11) *Dog with a burnt father.*

A Persian figure of speech, employed in abuse.

(12) *Or you shall devour more stick.*

A Persian sentence, signifying, 'you shall be well beaten.'

(13) *Cummar*.

A large, broad, and very heavy dagger.

(14) *Mashallah*.

An Arabic word, used to express approbation.

(15) *Khan*.

A Persian title, placed after the name. It is both hereditary and creative, the former is considered the highest; but is very seldom to be met with.

(16) *Begler Beg*.

Town governor, or chief magistrate.

(17) *Anderoon*.

The same as a harem.

(18) *Padersookhteh*.

Burnt father; a most contemptuous epithet.

(19) *Khanum*.

A Persian female title, signifying, "Lady," the wife or daughter of a Khan; used often in courtesy towards women of lower rank in common parlance, as Europeans use the term Madam.

(20) *Wallah, Billah*.

Two Persian words, used to express energetic feelings.

(21) *Iran*.

The oriental name for Persia.

(22) *This old man was a member of a tribe of Eliauts.*

The Eliauts are wandering tribes, who dwell almost entirely in tents, and whose wealth consists in flocks and herds.

The nature of the soil and climate of Persia is singularly favourable to such a life, and the character of the government of that country must always have given it additional charms. The Eliauts, or wandering tribes can enjoy by moving their tents from elevated to low plains, a continual spring; but their favourite residence has always been amid high and inaccessible mountains. They are reconciled by habit to privations, which the hand of power can hardly increase, and their manner of life inspires them with a savage freedom, that only admits of a very lenient authority. That of their chiefs is patriarchal: they repay his kindness with inviolable attachment. The character of such a race can never change: and there is probably no difference between the ancient and modern Eliaut, and man of a wandering tribe, except that the former ascended a mountain to adore the sun, or pronounced in a temple of fire the name of Zoroaster, while the latter repeats that of Mahomed, and murmurs a short and hurried prayer in a language (arabic) of which he is ignorant.—*Malcolm's History of Persia.*

(23) *Takdeer.*

Fate. Destiny.

(24) *Goorkhur.*

The wild ass, one of the swiftest and most sure footed of quadrupeds, it is thus mentioned by Mr. Morier in his second journey through Persia.

On the desert before we reached Casvin, in the grey of the morning, we gave chase to two wild asses, which the Persians call Goor Khur; but which had so much the speed of our horses, that when they had got at some distance, they stood still and looked behind at us snorting with their noses in the air, as if in contempt of our endeavours to catch them. The Persians sometimes succeed in killing them; but not without great dexterity and knowledge of their haunts. To effect this, they place relays of horsemen and dogs upon the track, which they are known to pursue, and then hunt them towards the relays, when the fresh dogs and horses are started upon the half exhausted animal. The whole of this account agrees with Xenophon, who says that their horsemen had no other means of catching them, than by dividing themselves into relays and succeeding one another in the chase.

Καὶ οἱ μὲν ὄντοι ἐπεὶ τὶς διωκοῖ, προδραμόντες ἀνεί-

στηκεσαν (πολὺ γὰρ τῷ ἵππου θᾶττον ἔτρεχον) καὶ πάλιν ἐπεὶ πλησιάζοι ὁ ἵππος τᾶντα ἐποίουν ὥστε ἕκ ἣν λαβεῖν εἰ μηδιαστάντες οἱ ἵππεῖς θηρῶεν διαδεχόμενοι ἵπποις.—Anab. lib. i. c. 5.

This animal is common to the whole of Persia, although its proper soil is Arabia. The modern Persians eat its flesh, and say it is better than that of the antelope; the ancients did the same, and it must be supposed that when Herodotus classes the ass among the animals which the rich Persians roasted whole, and eat when they indulged themselves in better fare than usual, he means the wild ass. *Herodotus, Clio* 133.

The wild ass is of a light mouse colour, with a dark streak over its shoulders, and down its back. The head is large, but it is much more light and lively, than the common ass in its gait. It is of a most obstinate nature, and seems to be refractory, under any restraint. Buffon says it does not differ from the domestic ass, except in its attributes of liberty and independence; he is decided in his opinion, that it is the animal called the Onagre, and not the Zebra, whose native soil and climate is South Africa, in the countries bordering upon the Cape of Good Hope.

The wildness and love of liberty, which characteris

this animal, are beautifully described by the prophet Jeremiah : “ *A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure.*” Chap. 2. v. 24. and again when their image is allied to all the horrors of a parched desert :—“ *And the wild asses did stand in the high places ; they snuffed up the wind like dragons ; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.*” Chap. 14. v. 6.

(25) *Cotall.*

A precipitous mountain pass.

CHAPTER II.

(1) *Enam.*

An Enam is a present from a superior, to an inferior.

(2) *Pillouille.*

A pillouille is a Persian dish, composed of boiled rice, and melted butter, with the addition sometimes of chickens, raisins and saffron.

(3) *Bismillah.*

The Mussulman grace before meals.

(4) *Barakillah.*

Barakillah is an Arabic expression, meaning, Bravo ! well done !

(5) *A Dildard.*

A dildard means literally a heart-ache, and is used to signify that a person is slightly unwell.

(6) *Demawend.*

A very high mountain near Teheran, the capital of Persia, the peak of which is covered with snow all the year round.

(7) *Nummud.*

A small carpet.

(8) *Gin.*

A gin is said to be a species of spirit, most hostile to the human race ; it is accounted particularly unlucky to behold one.

(9) *Jehanum.*

The Infernal regions. In Hebrew, Gehenna.

(10) *The manly game of the Jereed.*

The Jereed is a short lance, having a blunted head, when used in sport, but sharpened for warlike purposes ; it is one of the most favourite amusements, both in Persia and Turkey. A good description of this exercise will be found in Mr. Morier's " Ayesha."

(11) *Rayat.*

A peasant.

CHAPTER III.

(1) *Which was about four fursuks distant.*

A fursuk is a Persian measurement consisting of nearly four English miles.

(2) *Hummum.*

The building which contains the baths is so called in oriental countries.

(3) *And his beard and nails being newly dyed.*

The Persians shave all the head except a tuft of hair just on the crown, and two locks behind the ears; but they suffer their beards to grow, and to a much larger size than the Turks, and to spread more about the ears and temples. They almost universally dye them black by an operation not very pleasant, and necessary to be repeated generally once a fortnight; it is always performed in the hot bath, where the hair being well saturated takes the colour better. A thick paste of *Khenna* is first made, which is largely plastered over the beard, and which after remaining an hour is all completely washed off, and leaves the hair of a very strong orange colour, bordering upon that of brick dust. After this, as thick a paste is made of the leaf of the Indigo, (which previously has been pounded to a fine powder,) and of

this also a deep layer is put upon the beard ; but this second process to be taken well, requires two full hours. During all this operation the patient lies quietly flat upon his back whilst the dye (more particularly the indigo which is a great astringent,) contracts the features of his face in a mournful manner, and causes all the lower part of the visage to smart and burn. When the indigo is at last washed off, the beard is of a very dark bottle green ; but becomes a jet black, after being exposed to the air a short time. Another singular custom is that of dying the hands and feet : this is done by the above mentioned *Khenna*, which is generally put over every part of the hands and nails, as far as the wrist.—*Mr. Morier's First Journey through Persia.*

(4) *Aman.*

An exclamation meaning, mercy ! pity !

(5) *Merdiki.*

Accursed one.

(6) *Dewaneh.*

A madman.

(7) *Harumzadeh.*

Baseborn ! a term of the greatest reproach.

(8) *Wahi !*

Alas, woe is me ! literally translated.

(9) *Caravanserai*.

In every town of Persia, there are one, or more public caravanserais, for the accommodation of travellers. These edifices, which are also found at every stage on the principal roads of the kingdom, are in general built of stone or brick; their form is square, and the whole of the interior is divided into separate apartments; their walls, which are very high, are usually defended by towers, that they be secure against the attack of robbers.—*Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii.*

(10) *Balapoosh*.

A large cloak.

CHAPTER IV.(1) *Chibouque*.

A chibouque is a pipe, the tube of which is very long, and made of cherry-wood.

(2) *Beg*.

Beg in Persia, is a title given to a person somewhat above the common rank; it is made use of in the same manner as the European term of Mr.

(3) *Chervador*.

A head muleteer.

(4) *There is hardly a miscal of sense, in a dozen maunds of Hamadaneé heads.*

A miscal is a very small Persian weight; while a maund on the contrary, is about ten pounds English.

(5) *Toman.*

A gold Toman is about ten shillings.

(6) *Maidan.*

Open space—plain.

(7) *Musktehed.*

Chief priest, or head of the Sheah religion.

(8) *Rustum.*

The oriental Hercules.

(9) *Sheah.*

The Sheahs are a Mussulman sect, the principles of which are professed by the Persians. The following is a short description of their origin: “From the hour of the death of Mahomed, the adherents of Ali had maintained his right of succession to the caliphate, and had deemed those, by whom that right had been set aside as the greatest of sinners. The talents, the piety, and the reputation of the three first caliphs, preserved the empire from the effects of this spirit of discontent, and the ultimate elevation of Ali satisfied for a time, the clamour of

his friends ; but his death, and that of his sons, and the misfortunes of his descendants, who though admitted to the rank of Imams, or chief priests were excluded from all temporal power, led numbers to cherish, in secret, the principles of the sect of Sheah, and to mourn over the hard lot of the direct descendants of their holy prophet. The kingdom of Persia was the first whose inhabitants united in proclaiming themselves of this sect, and who vowed eternal hatred and war against those who professed the Soonec doctrine.—*Malcolm's History of Persia, vol. ii.*

For further particulars concerning this sect, and of their rivals the Soonees, consult the same history.

(10) *Serbaz.*

The Persian term for soldiers.

(11) *Yusuff.*

The oriental name for Joseph, who is accounted as a model of beauty.

(12) *Germaseer.*

Hot countries.

(13) *Sultaneah.*

The modern kings of Persia, have palaces in many parts of their dominions, whither they resort for the climate or the chace ; to these palaces are attached

villages, in which provisions are collected for the use of the court, as soon as the motions of the King are decided.

(14) *Gholam*.

Literally slave. Gholams are horsemen, who always attend on the king when he makes an excursion. They are paid, fed, clothed and armed at the king's expense. The word Gholam, is used figuratively to express their devotion to the king's service ; for they are not in reality in a state of servitude ; on the contrary, they are particularly honoured by the king.

(15) *Yaboo*.

A Yaboo is used to signify any horse not of the first blood.—*Anglice, Cocktail*.

(16) *Murwari*.

Murwari means, a pearl.

(17) *Would proclaim a Nejdee origin*.

Nejd is a place in Arabia, very famous for the superiority of its breed of horses.

(18) *You are as clever in stratagem, as an Ispahanee*.

The natives of Ispahan, have a reputation for cunning.

(19) *Tofinks*.

Guns.

(20) *Chappow*.

A predatory excursion.

CHAPTER V.

(1) *Dewankhaneh*.

The room of public audience.

(2) *Kafsh Khaneh*.

Literally "shoe room." It is a small entrance hall, where visitors and servants leave their shoes, before passing into the apartment where the master of the house receives his guests.—N.B. It is of course supposed that the reader is aware that orientals never uncover the head, and that their customs on entering a room or a mosque is exactly contrary to those of Europeans, for where a Frank doffs his hat, an oriental takes off his shoes.

(3) *Bulbul*.

A nightingale.

(4) *Khorassan*.

A province of Persia situated to the north east.

(5) *Nazir*.

Overlooker.—Steward.—Chief servant.

(6) *Fars*.

A southern province of Persia.

(7) *Chauder*.

A chauder is a large sheet, with which a Persian woman covers herself when she goes abroad ; it envelopes the whole form, and is made of either white or blue checked linen. The veil is made of white linen, with some net work in front to enable the person, whose face it conceals, to see, without being seen. A woman covered with both veil and chauder, would not be recognised even by her husband or relations ; should they meet her in the streets.

(8) *Kalemdone*.

The Kalemdone or Inkhorn, is made in Persia to hold both ink and pens ; it is in length about ten or twelve inches, and three or four round. It is generally beautifully painted, and is still worn by ministers in Persia, as an insignia of their office. It is stuck in the girdle, in the same part in which military men wear their daggers.—*Malcolm's History of Persia, vol i.*

(9) *Shambeh*.

Saturday.

(10) *Kalaat*.

A dress of honour.

(11) *Moolah.*

Moolah or Mollah, is a priest, or man of the law.

See note 1. chap. 1.

(12) *Kaneez.*

A female servant, or slave.

(13) *Jaunum.*

My soul ! an expression of endearment.

(14) *Azezim.*

My dear.

(15) *Rang.*

A Persian dye, composed of indigo.

(16) *Dilum.*

My heart, an expression of endearment.

(17) *Banoo.*

The chief wife, or female in a harem is called the Banoo.

(18) *Majdahluk.*

A Majdahluk is a present given to the bearer of good news.

(19) *Shah zadeh.*

A king's son is called Shah zadeh ; it is composed of two Persian words, *zadeh*, *born*, and *Shah*, *King*.

(20) *Frangistan.*

The oriental name for Europe.

(21) *And presently the richly ornamented waterpipes were presented to the two ladies.*

Persian ladies use the kaliaun, which is the mildest pipe that can be smoked, as the tobacco is firstly steeped, and even then the smoke drawn from it must pass through water, before it enters the mouth of the smoker.

CHAPTER VI.

(1) *My friend and I have been drinking wine, etc.*

The act of drinking wine by a Mahometan being contrary to the precepts of the Koran is punishable by law.

(2) *Daroga.*

The lieutenant of police.

CHAPTER VII.

(1) *Felek.*

The Felek is a long pole with a noose in the middle, into which the feet of those about to be bastinadoed are inserted and made fast; the pole is then lifted up by two ferashes, standing at either ends, while two others administer the punishment, striking the blow alternately,

(2) *Pishkidmud*.

A servant, whose duty it is to wait on the person of his master ; derived from two Persian words, *pish*, before, and *kidmud*, service.

(3) *Kabau*.

A kind of long garment, much resembling a petticoat, reaching to the ancles ; the upper part, together with the sleeves, being made very tight.

(4) *Noroz*.

The first day of the Mussulman year ; it takes place on the twenty-first of March. Among other customs it is usual for masters to bestow cloaks of cloth on their servants.

(5) *Viziere Nizam*.

The Viziere Nizam is the minister at the head of every thing that pertains to war.

(6) *Lootee*.

Among others came the Lootees or buffoons, headed by a chief : these may in some manner be assimilated to our bands of marrow bones and cleavers. They attend at merry makings and public festivals, and in the style and manner of their wit, disregard all delicacy. They are composed of the most profligate of men, and

can only advance in their profession by superior ribaldry.—*Morier's Second Journey through Persia.*

(7) *Manzel.*

A large house.

CHAPTER VIII.

(1) *Bachahau.*

Literally children. The word is used to call servants.

(2) "*O Sahib, bid me perform any other act, and I am your slave ; but force me not to swear a false oath on the Koran, I dare not.*"

The Mahometans, particularly the Persians, have a great dread of perjuring themselves on the Koran ; the oath is administered with the utmost solemnity.

(3) *The Shekkeh.*

A capital punishment of Persia inflicted on thieves. The culprit is tied by either foot to two posts with his head down, and in that situation is cut in two by the sword of the executioner.

(4) *Bero.*

Begone.

CHAPTER X.

(1) *Lahoff*.

A Lahoff is a coverlet stuffed with cotton, and lined with chintz.

(2) *Shaitan*.

The devil.

CHAPTER XI.

(1) *While Feridoon was armed with both shield and sword.*

The shield is still much used, by both the Koords and the wandering tribes. It is in general circular in its form.

CHAPTER XII.

(1) *Your father is of noble blood.*

Ancient family, and noble descent, are much more prized in Persia, than in Turkey.

(2) *Hindowanee*.

A water melon.

(3) *Khorasan never sent forth a better blade.*

The blades of Khorasan are particularly prized, and

are considered by the Persians as superior to those of Damascus ; they are watered in the same manner.

CHAPTER XIII.

(1) *Mahomed Reza Meerza, &c.*

The Prince Governor of a province, is possessed of absolute authority, within the dominions over which his rule extends. The larger governments within the kingdom of Persia, were almost invariably bestowed upon Shah zadehs, during the life of Fath Ali. The word meerza, is derived from *meer*, or *ameer* ‘lord,’ and *za* a contraction of *zada*, ‘soft.’ When it follows the name, instead of being prefixed, meerza always denotes a prince of the blood royal ; when prefixed it signifies secretary only.

(2) *Karagoosh.*

Literally translated, signifies an eagle.

(3) *To have seen his bag well filled.*

Horses in Persia when tethered, feed from a bag, which is fastened to their heads.

(4) *A fortunate hour was proclaimed.*

No journey of consequence is undertaken in the East, without an astrologer being consulted about the hour,

most promising of a successful issue following the undertaking on account of which the voyage is made.

(5) *And conceal it within the folds of his cap was the work of a moment.*

The Persians make use of the folds of their cap, as a kind of pocket, and place letters, papers, and even money there.

CHAPTER XIV.

(1) *Their large turbans.*

The Koords wear very large turbans, while the Persian head-dress is composed of a black lambskin cap.

(2) *A Tofinckhee.*

A musketeer or marksman.

(3) *Yezd.*

A town of one of the south eastern provinces of Persia, famous for its manufacture of a species of silk brocade.

(4) *Mazanderan.*

One of the most northern provinces of Persia; its capital is Asterabad.

CHAPTER XV.

(1) *Sultan Khoda Bundah.*

Khoda Burdah means the slave of God, from Khoda, God, and Bundah, a slave or bondsman.

(2) *Bala Khoneh.*

Literally an upper room. It is in general a small apartment, having windows at three of its sides, and situated at the very top of the house. It is derived from two Persian words, Baba, above, and Khoneh, a house.

(3) *Serperdeh.*

The Serperdeh is composed of canvas walls, that surround a tent, and except by express permission, none but the king and his sons, are allowed to make use of it.

(4) *A visit from him at Hamadan.*

The inhabitants of no nation are more particular than those of Persia, concerning the etiquette to be observed during the paying, or receiving a visit.

CHAPTER XVI.

(1) *Fakeer.*

A poor man.—A wandering beggar.—A fortune-teller.

(2) *On the eighth day of the last month of Mohurrum.*

Mauz-u-doulah, who was a bigoted adherent to the sect of Ali, when his power was fully established, commanded that the first ten days of the month of Mohurrum, should be set aside for a general mourning over the fate

of Hussein ; the son of Ali, who was slain on the plains of Kerbelleh, in the sixtieth year of the Hejirah. The commemoration of this event has been ever since religiously observed by the Sheahs, and the annual ceremony has tended, in no slight degree, to keep alive their hatred against the Soonees.

(3) *Ramazan.*

The Mahometans are enjoined fasting as a sacred duty. They are taught to believe, that in the month of Ramazan, God sent the Koran from heaven ; and during that month, every Mahometan must refrain, from dawn till sunset, from eating, drinking, smoking, and all sensual gratifications. None are exempt from this obligation but travellers, sick persons, women with child, or those who are nursing ; and even these are required to make amends for their involuntary neglect of this ordination, by fasting at some other period or by giving extraordinary alms to the poor.

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